

SKETCHES AND REMINISCENCES

FROM

Queensland, Russia, and Elsewhere,

BY

H. LING ROTH.

1. Queensland.
2. Russia, 40 Years Ago.
3. Elsewhere.

Reprinted from the "Halifax Courier."

Sept., 1915 to May, 1916.



Interior View of a Great-Russian Peasant's Hut. Reproduced by permission from a painting in the possession of Sir Edward B. Tylor, F.R.S.

The Peasant on the left is preparing to make bast shoes; the man in the centre is crossing himself in front of the sacred pictures in the corner of the room. In the background, is the rush light (a species of *Verbascum* being used) and on a shelf above the girl with the distaff is the *Samovar* or Tea Urn. The old man on the right is just about to get off the brick stove; the suspended pot, with a spout, is tilted forward for washing purposes, and the wooden platform on top in front is a large shelf where articles are stored and the Peasants often sleep.

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SKETCHES AND REMINISCENCES

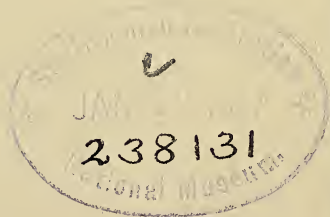
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Queensland.

I.—FRANCIS HENRY.

There appeared to be an altercation going on at the door of Mr. Feathers, the undertaker, and out walked a good looking young man, quietly dressed, with a genial smile on his face, followed by Mr. Feathers himself. All the while the young man was arguing. "Why shouldn't I order my own coffin if I want to! Here's the money planked down! You don't often get a man to pay for his coffin in advance," and the speaker turned to the crowd saying "Boys! did you ever hear of such a thing?" and he walked indignantly away. Some laughed, others, like the undertaker, did not quite understand the man. He was so serious, yet it was a ludicrous request that had been made, and at the same time the man was in every respect so quietly behaved and so gentlemanly that one's first thought was that he must be a harmless lunatic.

The young man had called at Mr. Feathers' about nine o'clock in the evening and said he had come to order a coffin. The undertaker had put down the name given and the address at a well known hotel. Any stranger might die at an hotel, but who would pay the funeral expenses? and Mr. Feathers put the question as delicately as he could. The man said he would pay in advance, and produced his notes, but when the undertaker wished to go and measure the body, he was told he had no need to go to any hotel at all, he could do so now, here, at once! It took Mr. Feathers a little while before he understood that he was being asked to measure a live man—just like a tailor, as he said afterwards, and he began to think his would-be

customer was drunk; but there were no signs, past or present, of drink about the man, and the undertaker thought it best to get rid of him, and, allowing him to go on arguing, pushed him gently out. For years afterwards Mr. Feathers used to relate with no little pride his interview with a lunatic. Only it was not a lunatic. It was Francis Henry having one of his little jokes.

Another time also, in Brisbane, Francis Henry called at one of the banks, gave a card to one of the cashiers, and asked to see the manager. Being duly shown into the Torture Chamber he confided to the manager that he had a cheque, a large cheque, a very large cheque, which he wished to cash, and if it did not inconvenience the bank—he would not like to inconvenience the bank—could he take the money away with him. The manager was a bit nonplussed at the way the request was put, as Francis Henry could very well have obtained the money across the counter. He explained he did not think any amount drawn would be likely to inconvenience the bank. Could he see the cheque? Francis Henry fumbled about in an awkward way, and after searching every pocket remembered he had for safety put the cheque inside the lining of his hat. He produced it at last—it was well folded up, and, unfolding it carefully and slowly with the tips of his forefingers and thumbs, presented a cheque for about twelve pounds to the now astonished and slightly annoyed manager, apologising at the same time for the trouble it was giving to cash such a very large cheque. The manager allowed no sign of annoyance to

escape him, took the cheque, and left the chamber, promising to return at once with the money. Francis Henry was naturally delighted and pranced round the room. After some little delay the manager returned, accompanied by a porter carrying two heavy bags. Telling the porter to hand these to his strange customer, he said, "It is very good of you to show us this consideration, as we cannot always meet very large cheques, but I am happy to say we have the money, and here it is—in copper!"

Full of light-hearted fun he had his ups and downs like other people. Hearing that Port Denison was booming he took passage on the first steamer and arrived there without a penny and without a hat he could call his own, for having lost it on the voyage up he had borrowed one from the captain. He was no sooner on shore than he tossed an hotel keeper for his and won. Then he ran a footrace against a man who fancied himself and won a note (£1). Then more races followed, and he soon had five notes in his pocket. But those who had lost, wanting their money back, dared him to ride a rough-looking, badly broken-in horse. He made the usual pretence that he knew nothing about a horse, and amidst the jeers of the crowd tried to mount on the off side. The next moment he was sprawling on the ground and lost his bet. Thinking him a new chum and rare good sport, they dared him again, and to the dismay of more than one it was found he mastered the horse in no time, nor could the beast buck him off. After a short stay he got down on his luck again, for the place was not then in a flourishing condition, and he determined to try Port Mackay. He walked the distance via Fort Cooper along a blazed tree line, for there were no roads then, not even an indirect one. It was the most trying experience he ever had—ninety miles on foot—at the end of the wet season, with mosquitoes and swamps all the way, and without food after the second morning, as he had run short and missed a point where he understood there was a bush

pub. Ragged and dirty he might have been mistaken for the proverbial sundowner, but his bearing, gentle manners and speech showed him to be a man of education, though starving, and as he made light of it all and joked while still ravenous, he was soon made welcome at the first station house he managed to get to.

In New Zealand on one occasion he had started off to some diggings with seventeen shillings and sixpence in his pockets, joining on the way a young man who had been a lieutenant in the army. They had got well away from the settlements when a thick fog overtook them and they were naturally bushed, wandering about for some twenty-four hours and starving. After a bit they got on to the road and arrived at a coach station, where they wished to buy bread and meat, but both the landlord and landlady, having just had some family jars, refused to sell them anything. Francis Henry eventually got round the old man, pretending he wanted to buy "boggins" of things and showing his money. He tied up his purchase (sardines, marmalade, flour, sugar, tea, and heaven knows what) and asked for the reckoning, and while pretending to count out the money he darted out of the place with the goods. His friend tripped up the innkeeper as he was about to give chase, and they both cleared off and enjoyed their spoil. Some time afterwards Francis Henry drove the mail coach along that very road, and the first time he came to the inn he offered to pay the reckoning, but the old landlord refused the money, averring that the trick played him served him jolly well right for his want of hospitality.

Francis Henry joked to the end. When I went to see him the last time, he was dying of consumption and he could barely speak. He said something I did not catch. It was a joke of some sort, for he chuckled in his quiet way, and there was still the same old happy smile when he passed away.

II.—CAPTAIN WAWN.

Capt. Wawn was born in January, 1837. His father was Squire of West Boldon, County Durham, England, and I believe at one time member of Parliament for South Shields. As a lad Capt. Wawn was particularly handy with his pencil. He was always drawing small pictures of ships or camps of Indians with spears, tomahawks, bows and arrows, etc. His favourite drawing was a schooner in every possible position, in full sail, at anchor, close hauled, in a gale, wrecked, and so on—every blank page in his school books was filled with schooners and Indian warriors. This was at Dr. Steel's school, Douglas Bay, Isle of Man.

He wrote a book on his South Sea experiences entitled *South Sea Islanders and the Queensland Labour Trade*, published in 1893. The original MS. of this book was lost in the wreck of the s.s. "Quetta," and he had to rewrite it. The

published illustrations do not do justice to his abilities as an artist, which were considerable. He was ambidexterous and it was interesting to see him work with a brush in each hand. Wawn was an excellent sailor; he never lost a ship, for, as he said, he was his own bos'un, making it a rule, which he never broke, always to examine the rigging of his ship for himself. His men liked to sail with him. He was a very straightforward man, and held in great respect by all who knew him. The following little episodes in his career may not be without interest:

He left the sea to try his luck at gold digging, at which occupation he was not very successful, and a severe attack of fever found him one of the earliest inmates of the hospital on the Comet river. He came out with ten shillings small change in his pocket, and two pounds sewn up

in his shirt. He offered a publican five shillings for tea, bed and breakfast, but there were no beds to be had, and he was proffered what shelter he could get from a dray in the paddock for the night. The ground being wet, he declined to camp there, and it was as well he did so, for during the night the dray collapsed and the carrier had to crawl out from underneath as best he could. In the meanwhile it had been raining heavily up country, and when he came to the river it was a "banker," the water covering the bridge six feet deep. The two pounds he wanted for his fare from Rockhampton to Sydney, and as he had been compelled to spend four shillings for a "shout,"—that is pay for drinks for all present—he had but one shilling to spare. Not being a man to "cadge," he applied for a job, and like all sailors, being a handy man, he quickly obtained a small one, namely, to put up a few fence posts. The river did not look like subsiding, so he spun out the job, putting up only a post a day. On the first evening he had sung some sailor songs to the diggers and shepherds, some of whom, like himself, were water bound, and, as he had a good voice, the publican tried indirectly to keep him there, so that his customers, some of whom were returning with big cheques, should spend their money freely. He became very popular, and during the ten days or so he was obliged to remain there, the publican did good business, much to Wawn's disgust. He was glad to get away from these surroundings when the river went down, the publican returning to him the little money he had spent, and he had his keep for nothing.

On another occasion when "humping his drum" by himself and traversing more or less open forest country, he came upon the tracks of another man evidently also alone. The sight naturally cheered him, for he was in new country, and, as the tracks were very fresh, he quickened his pace to overtake the stranger. He had not been following them very long before he perceived the unmistakable impressions of the broad-soled feet of wild black fellows. The man ahead was evidently being "stalked." Wawn therefore hurried on at his best pace, and soon saw the heads of the Blacks bobbing up and down as they now ran forward and stopped, ran forward again and hid waiting, and then quickly went on a few paces again. The bushes and trees and rank grass hid them occasionally from view, but their actions were clear enough. It was also evident from their behaviour that their intended prey was within sight. Wawn was unarmed, and if he made himself known too soon the Blacks might turn on him. But quick actions were necessary, and he increased his pace and dodged much the same as the Blacks were doing, who, too intent on their own hunt, were quite unaware who was in the rear, until with a terrific yell he ran suddenly forward, and the Blacks with greater yells ran in all directions! The innocent bushman in front was as frightened as they were, for until Wawn came up to him he had no notion what the yells meant, and naturally thought he was

about to be attacked, but could see no one. The stranger turned out to be a very old man of a class not uncommonly met with in those days—a convict, one who had been "lagged" for "lifting" copper boilers, and had been one of the early lot of transports to Moreton Bay District when it was a penal settlement, but now, purged of his crime, a harmless and much respected journeyman saddler.

In the course of his wanderings in search of gold, Wawn and his then mate, Jack Jessup, struck at Eidswoold, on the Burnett River, a small patch of gold worth about £200, which they quickly cleared out. Before setting out to prospect they ought to have provided themselves with prospectors' licences, without which they were liable to a heavy fine. Jessup therefore started off to the nearest magistrate to get one, but was waylaid by some men who suspicioned his errand, and, before the unhappy man knew what he was about, the news had spread that a new goldfield had been discovered. A big rush from the main camp immediately took place, but the diggers found no gold, as Wawn and his mate had only struck an isolated pocket in which the drift had duffered out. The men were very mad, and wanted to know who it was that had misled them. There was only one man on the place and that was Wawn. Bent upon revenge, they said they would hang him. Buckley, the Police Magistrate, and three troopers were watching the proceedings from the other side of the creek, but dared not move lest they might precipitate matters. Wawn protested his innocence and stoutly maintained he was not the man who had caused the rush, as he had not been off the ground since he started digging. This was quite true, but, in the excitement and anger at being deceived, he was not listened to, although there were a few who tried to get fair play. As long as there was hope he did not wish to "blow" on his mate, who stood trembling against a tree a few yards off. Both Wawn and Jessup were aware that, if it were known that Jessup were the cause of the rush, the latter would have been hanged without delay, in spite of troopers or police magistrate, although, as Jessup owned afterwards, if he had found they were going to extremes he would have owned up. While the crowd was vociferating and disputing, the diggers, who had lold of Wawn, put a noose round his neck, but his somewhat long hair interfering with its proper adjustment, the man commenced to cut it with a bowie knife and inadvertently drew blood. Wawn, with a self possession that had before now got him out of many a fix, turned round to the man as well as he could and calmly asked to be shown a little consideration, and if he was to be hanged that it should be done decently, adding they had better send for a pair of shears. The digger sent someone for the shears, the rest laughed at Wawn's coolness, and for a moment the rope was slackened. In a trice Wawn whipped it off and, taking the men unawares, jumped the creek and drew his revolver on the crowd, but Buckley, still watching, laid his hand on Wawn's shoulder and said "Come, enough of that!" So suddenly was it done that he was

away before the mob knew what had happened, although some of the more infuriated diggers fired shots after him.

After this he returned to his old love, the sea, and was accidentally killed in Sydney in 1903, being knocked over by a runaway horse.

After his death I had inquiries made at the Immigration Offices for his log books, but was informed nothing was known about them. I know that his well illustrated log books were there, so no doubt they will appear some day at the sale of the effects of a descendant of one of the officials!

III.—JIMMY KELLY.

Jimmy Kelly had taken over a small station not many miles from Port Denison. It was mostly "new country," only lately stocked with cattle, and the stations which had been formed all round were much larger than his. He was not a popular man, for he aimed too much at playing the gentleman, although it was known he had only recently made his money on the diggings. There were also other objections. His cattle had curious brands, many of them quite illegible, and some outspoken stockmen declared they were all faked. He was, however, a good bushman and his help was gladly accepted at mustering times when the calves were branded, &c.

The wives of his nearest neighbours tried to make friends with Mrs. Kelly. She was very young and very timid, and while they found her a bright and agreeable little woman who looked well after her home, they noticed she never spoke of the time previous to her marriage. The acquaintance might have blossomed out into real friendship between some of them but that Kelly had an unpleasant way of dropping in just as the ladies were beginning their little confidences, and it looked as if he did not want any of them to become too friendly with his wife, although he was an affectionate husband. Life in the bush means plenty of riding, and yet the women folk do not get much of it, the reason being that with the scarcity of servants, their household duties are too exacting to allow of much time for anything else. Without being particularly fond of horses, Mrs. Kelly was a good horsewoman, and, on the few occasions when she rode over to see her neighbours, it was always remarked how thoroughly at home she was in the saddle, or even anywhere with horses. But when the Blacks who were in the habit of visiting the various stations had more than once volunteered the information that they had seen her standing barefooted on a barebacked horse in the stockyard, no one believed them.

When her baby came the true hospitality of the bush asserted itself, and, in spite of Kelly, the friendships ripened, and as the child grew up into a pretty, graceful little girl, the children of the neighbouring squatters made much of her. All the same Kelly did not increase in popularity, for he had long since been found not to be straight in his dealings. About six or seven years after Kelly had apparently settled down, as he was one morning saddling his horse at the back of the house, the station dogs were making more than the usual shindy among themselves, and allowed a stranger to get close

up to the station house verandah before he was observed. On perceiving the new arrival they left off their quarrelling and began to yelp at him. Kelly, noticing the change in their tune, hitched up his horse, looked round to see who had come, and saw, not only the Port Denison bank manager, whom he neither wanted nor expected, but also in the same line of sight a man dodging the trees some way back. Without showing himself he called to his wife to attend to the visitor told her he was off to Bowen, pulled some papers out of the back part of a cupboard, and stuffed them hurriedly into his shirt. Then he darted through the house, mounted his horse, and long before the yelping dogs had quietened down he had, in bush parlance, "made tracks."

In his hurry he had unknowingly dropped a small brown bundle, and his wife, crossing the room as he went out, observed it and picked it up. A bundle of bank notes worth about £200 is not picked up every day, and by the time Mrs. Kelly realised what she held in her hand and had run after him to tell him about it, he was well out of sight and out of hearing. Putting the bundle in her pocket she called off the still yelping dogs, and the bank manager was allowed to come on to the verandah. She was bewildered enough at her husband's sudden disappearance, and her confusion was made worse when she understood that something had gone wrong, and that she would have to give up her home! The bank manager and his attendant, who carried a writ, ransacked the house in search of "papers," but all they found was a small portion of a bank note in the cupboard we have heard of. The news spread fast enough. The few squatters round about had the satisfaction of knowing that the estimate formed of their neighbour was correct, and their wives had nothing but sympathy for the poor woman.

After waiting for many months in expectation of hearing from her husband, during which time she was a guest at a neighbouring station she one day saw in the "Sydney Morning Herald" a paragraph relating to the engagement of a young lady in Sydney to a Queensland squatter, and, for some unaccountable reason, she could not get it out of her head that this squatter was her husband. She had somehow dreaded something of this sort, and perhaps it was this dread which, womanlike, had made her jump to a correct conclusion. However, she determined to go to Sydney and see for herself, and her inquiries on the spot soon gave her to

know more than she wanted. This determined her to call upon the girl, who could evidently know nothing of her intended's antecedents.

She took her child with her with a sort of vague feeling that its presence might have some good result on the girl. The interview was painful and awkward. The girl was haughty, repellent and unsympathetic, and poor Mrs. Kelly had to explain her unhappy position in the plainest words before the girl could be got to understand there was any sort of objection to her marriage. Mrs. Kelly's story was told as follows:—

"I never knew my parents. My earliest recollections are my being trained, together with others equally young, for the circus business, and we all understood we had been bought from our parents for that purpose. One day, when I was about 15 or 16—I do not know my age for certain—the horse on which I was practising stumbled, and I fell off, breaking my arm. On recovery, I had lost my nerve, was no further good for circus riding, and the proprietor and his wife said I must find something else to do. We had all been taught household work, and it had been suggested I should go out as a servant, when Mr. Kelly—a friend of the proprietor—happened to call in. He had been on the diggings and had made some money, and now he wanted to be a gentleman. He offered to marry me and take me out to Queensland, and as that was better than going out to service I agreed. He has been a good husband to me, and we have been very happy, and now you have come between us!"

But Missie had no ears for a sad story. She had been staring at the child from the moment it came in, more and more impressed with its likeness to its father, and when Mrs. Kelly came to the fact that this was his child, Missie could restrain herself no longer—she rushed at the frightened thing, clasped it in her arms only too happy to embrace anything that belonged to her darling intended!

The screams of the child and the indignant outcry of the mother brought others into the room, and amongst others Kelly, who, of course, knew nothing of his wife's presence. Both women

caught a glimpse of him as he rushed away, and that was the last they saw, although not the last they heard, of him.

Several months after the above occurrence some Blacks out west reported the discovery of the remains of a white man. When the remains were brought in there was the usual dispute as to whether they were those of a man recently dead or of one who must have met his death years ago, yet well preserved owing to the droughty nature of the climate. The Blacks maintained the man had been dead for years. On the other hand, a station manager and a stockman insisted that the man had only been dead a few months, and identified the remains as those of a man who had passed that way in search of gold, and who had been addressed by another old gold digger as Jim, or something beginning with a "G!" The two men had not gone off together, so no suspicion of foul play could be attached to the digger. Nothing was found in the pockets or belt pouch except a large portion of a bank note—the pipe and tobacco, if any had been left when the man succumbed, had no doubt been taken by the Blacks. That was all the clue there was, but the bank manager remembered the torn bank note, and communicated all the circumstances to the Insurance Company which agreed to pay the insurance money, but when Mrs. Kelly went to the office to draw the money she found it had been drawn out by another Mrs. Kelly the day before! She had, however, the greater part of the bundle of notes, and her Northern friends did not forget her. She settled down fairly comfortably as a lodging-house keeper, her daughter ultimately marrying a well-to-do squatter.

About six or seven years after the finding of the remains, the bank manager went for his holidays to the Hot Lakes, New Zealand, and to his amazement saw Kelly comfortably seated at dinner at the hotel there. The recognition was instantaneous, mutual, and unacknowledged, but Kelly soon left the table, and as immediately afterwards that terrible earthquake occurred which destroyed the Pink Terraces, it is supposed Kelly was destroyed with them—but who knows!

IV.—JIM AND BILL.

Some thirty-five years ago, when there was a big boom in sugar plantations at Port Mackay and the original planters were selling their estates to syndicates at fabulous profits and the transfers were giving increased work all round, two men, whose names I forget, but whom we may call Jim and Bill, arrived amongst a lot of other immigrants on board the "Scottish Knight," and were engaged as labourers on the Pioneer Plantation, a plantation situated next above the Foulden tidal crossing on the Pioneer River. In the early days, before the wooden bridge was built at the Hermitage lower down, this ford was THE crossing for getting to the north side. In those days, during the wet

season, when the river was in flood, it was almost an impossibility for anyone to get across at all, and at high tide, when the water swept up with considerable force, all traffic was likewise stopped. Nevertheless, on many a Saturday night, foolhardy men coming from town, and calling at Mickey Comhither's, thought they would try their luck. Then their dead bodies would be recovered from the deep pool under the dense scrub overhanging the water just above the crossing. In fact, so frequent were these casualties that a drag was kept at Foulden for use on Sunday mornings!

On one occasion Henry Bell, a squatter who had spent all his life in the bush, and might

have known the risks he ran, attempted to swim his horse across when the tide was up and still flowing. The horse started fairly enough, but seemed to lose courage half-way and "bottomed." This carried the man out of the saddle; the horse tried to get on top of him, but Bell turned on his back and splashed water at the horse until it turned away. Bell struck out for the opposite bank, and, being a good swimmer, reached it safely. It was an anxious moment for us who helplessly watched from the bank what was taking place.

At another time a fine draught horse was drowned. The dray was caught by the rising tide, and the driver, losing his head, jumped off, leaving the horse to fend for itself. It was a painful sight. The powerful animal made terrible plunges out of the water to free itself from the cart, which every time drew it back, and no doubt had the horse been free of its blinkers it would have seen its way to a sandy bank not yet covered with water and so have saved its life.

But if the crossing had its sad times, a ludicrous incident once took place there. A man known as Mac, whose characteristic was the strong language he indulged in, and two mates were having a bit of a spree, and thought they could paddle across with the tide up on a log which had just touched the bank. They gave themselves no time to think, and there they were, like three frogs in a row, in the middle of the stream, when owing to an eddy they could neither go forward nor back. They began to realise that their frolic might end in disaster. Then Mac, in his extremity, vowed that if he ever got safely to bank he would never, never, never swear again! By good luck the log ultimately stranded higher up, where the shallower water allowed the men to get off, and the first thing Mac did on reaching dry land was to curse the river for wetting his clothes!

"They vow to mend their lives and yet they don't,
Because if drowned they can't, and if spared they won't."

To return to our two men, Jim and Bill. They became great friends, worked, lived, and played together, and became so inseparable generally that in the end they both began to court the same girl. This was awkward for the girl! But Bill, by some underhand trick, so Jim averred, was chosen, and there the friendship ended for ever. Jim took his defeat very badly, became morose, consorted with no one, and finally left the plantation. On leaving, Jim told Bill he would be the death of him, whereupon Bill offered to have it out there and then, but they had hardly begun before they were separated, and Jim departed, still threatening he would be the death of Bill. Bill laughed. He knew in a fair fight he was as good as Jim and had nothing to fear. He married and settled down. Jim got an overseer's post not far off and did a deal of riding about.

Not very long afterwards, on a lovely afternoon, one of those glorious fine weather days

during the dry season for which Mackay is noted, I was on a hill near Mielere admiring the seascape, with the little islands that dotted an almost rippleless sea, where the great Captain Cook had pioneered his little craft more than a hundred years ago, and then, turning to the magnificent scenery around me, I could see the busy plantation hands, and now and then caught faint sounds from those so far below me. The tide was out, and the water, as low as it ever is at any time, was rippling over the pebbles at the crossing, and it seemed to me I could almost hear its babbling. While thus enjoying the beautiful prospect I observed a horseman slowly approaching the river from the other side. As the horse got to a pool of water it lowered its head for a drink, and whether in so doing it pulled too hard at the reins which the man had not slackened, or from whatever cause, the man fell head foremost over the horse's head into the pool on his face, and lay there perfectly still, and as it appeared to me with his hands under his body. The horse tugged itself free, went on with its drinking, and then turned round to look for a feed. It was several minutes before anyone realised what had happened, and then a passing Kanaka, seeing a stray horse, attempted to catch it, and in doing so saw the man in the pool. He raised a shout and soon there was a fair crowd, but, as is so common on such occasions, no one seemed to know what to do, and it was a considerable time before I saw them attempt to pick up the man. I had to make a long detour to get down, and when I arrived the man was quite dead. It was Jim. It struck me that the old saying that curses come home to roost had been verified once more.

The fine weather had passed away, and we were now in the middle of the wet season. The river had been in flood several times, but after a few days of rainless, but still overcast, weather, the rain one morning began to fall in the usual tropical downpours, and before nightfall we could rest assured that before many hours were over the river would be in flood. Then the heavy rain ceased, and I went round the plantation, as far as it was possible to do so, with the overseers, to see that the open drains were all in working order, and to ascertain that the men and the Kanakas were housed all right. Returned, I went in and changed. It is dreary work sitting alone in a house with the rain hammering the iron roof, with practically nothing to do, or, rather, not able to do anything. I was therefore glad to get a message from my next neighbour, Macrae, of the Pioneer plantation, to join him and his sister, and a young Irish friend from Melbourne. Before starting I noticed the tide was out, and that there was only a very faint rise in the water as yet.

We had not been long at a game of "Nap" when a messenger arrived saying the mailboat was expected early next morning, and if our friend wished to get back to Victoria by that steamer he had better come into port at once. On any other occasion the guest would have been pressed to stay until nearer the time of the departure of the tender which meets the steamer; but in the wet season there was always

a bit of a risk, and the buggy was ordered round at once. When the buggy came to the verandah steps there sat Bill as driver! The slight freshness in the river was not sufficient to prevent the horse and buggy crossing at Foulden, but Bill was particularly warned that if, on his return, he came to the crossing after 8 p.m., or it was too dark to see, he was on no account to attempt to cross, but was to put up at Fryerne on the south side, the house of a mutual friend. It was not raining when they left, and Bill knew his way about.

About seven o'clock the rain came down in torrents again, and when I left about nine it was still pouring. There was no moon, and the only thing to do was to let the horse take its own time, and of course it knew its way home. It took me nearly an hour to ride a mile against wind and rain. We had no anxiety about Bill,

for his orders were clear, and we thought him and his horse safely housed at Fryerne.

The next morning as the tide ran out some Kanakas observed what was at first thought to be the roots of a tree emerging from the water, but it was soon evident that it was an overturned buggy, and before long the horse came to view, while in a deeper pool we found the body of Bill entangled in his macintosh overcoat. Bill had not attended to his instructions. It turned out afterwards that Sakai, a Kanaka girl employed at Foulden, watching from the house, had seen two lights in the river about 8.30 in the evening, and, thinking it strange that lights should be there on such a night, told the housekeeper about them, but the housekeeper told her to hold her tongue and not be silly. Then the girl saw the two lights go out and Jim had fulfilled his threat.

V.—THE "COB."

The "Cob" was a short, thick set man with a huge head; he was possessed of considerable ability, and was nothing more nor less than a Bohemian. As a youth he had been apprenticed to a London doctor, but preferred a roving life, and hence, late in the sixties, he found himself stock driving and run hunting (i.e., looking for new country) in the Central and Northern lands of the then young Colony of Queensland. From all accounts those were exciting times. Run hunting had been going on ever since the Colony had been separated from New South Wales, and even before then, and reached its climax well in the middle of the seventies, although many hundreds of men continued the game for years afterwards. When a man had discovered new land suitable for his purpose, he would ride for his life to the Lands Office at Brisbane to register his claim, give a description of the land and state the locality, together with as much detail as he could in order to be sure that his claim should prove good. It sometimes happened that two men simultaneously discovered "new" country, which would ensure a race between the two for several hundred miles—the horses were shown no mercy—it was a matter of a fortune or nothing! Sometimes they would attempt and succeed in making each other drunk, or they would drug each other's liquor, or they would unhobble their opponent's horse, at night, while grazing in the paddock of the bush pub, or let down the rails, which served as a gate, and so let the horses stray, and, in fact, do anything conceivable to lessen the opponent's chance, stopping short at murder only. Men have been known to refuse each other rations or a drink when riding to town as counter-claimants. If they arrived at night they would camp on the steps of the Lands Office and wait until the department opened in the morning. Occasionally a smart man entered by the back door, and so got his claim in first. For in those days the time a man's papers were put in was registered, on the principle of first come first served.

As men often took up land and held it for a rise without stocking it, an Act was soon passed which allowed no claimants to be registered owners until the land had been stocked with a certain number of cattle per square mile. Then what used to happen was this. When the land was discovered, a mob of say 500-600 head of cattle was driven up at a death pace—lame ones and calves being left behind, and when the mob was within a few days' journey of the goal a mate or other trustworthy person would be dispatched to the Lands Office to put in the proof. An outside adventurer learning his errand would dog this man's steps, ply him with drink if possible, find out the actual number of head of cattle sent up, and if it were below the regulation number he too would start for town. Arrived in town the first man put in his proof, then the second man would swear the statement of the first to be false. Both men stretched points considerably. In consequence of the dispute an inspector would be sent out to investigate matters. If the discoverers could not get at him, and found he was really an honest man, they would try to deceive him by driving the cattle at night from one part of the run to another in order to induce him to believe when he made his inspection during the day that there were several mobs in different parts, instead of the one only which had been driven from one place to another at night. In this they would as often succeed as not, for the inspector would probably know nothing of pastoral pursuits and, as the saying is, could probably not tell a "cow from a hoss!" All cattle would appear much the same to him, and hence he would not easily discover the fraud practised upon him, unless someone split on the run hunters.

It was one of these run hunting expeditions that the Cob once thought he had come face to face with the famous Bunyip—the fabulous monster which is supposed to live in lagoons, coming out to feed at night only, but which has

never yet been seen by anybody. He was riding a newly-purchased horse, a bit of a buck jumper, when his mate, George Potter, wanted a drink out of his water bag. Unfortunately Potter let some of the water drop on to the back of the horse, which immediately bucked and sent the Cob flying into a tree overhead. He came down without much hurt, but lost his spectacles. Potter went after the retreating horse, but by the time he came back it was so late that they decided to camp where they were. All went well until they were both suddenly aroused in the middle of the night, and, looking round as well as they could in the darkness, they beheld a huge animal about 8 or 10 feet high glaring at them with a pair of very bright eyes. It was the Bunyip at last! Fear naturally caused them to exaggerate what they saw and Potter, when he had got over his first fright, drew his revolver and fired. There was a slight rustle, but no other sound, and without a cry the object disappeared. This uncanny disappearance was worse than the apparition. There was no more sleep that night, and the rest of the hours was passed in anxiety, fear and trembling. When day dawned they began to look for the tracks of the beast. They found none, but they found the Cob's spectacles which had no doubt been hanging in the tree until brought down by Potter's shot, and which they had taken for the Bunyip's eyes!

On another occasion the Cob had a fright based on more solid grounds. He was hard up and was doing what every good stockman hates to do, namely, "humping his drum." Coming to a waterhole where he proposed to camp for the night, he was joined by a man, Bottle-Green, an eccentric shepherd up north noted for his cabbage tree (palm tree) hats. After a quiet night, at early dawn, when the sun had not yet risen, the Cob woke up, and from the peculiar wavy movements in the surrounding grass he discovered that they were being quietly surrounded by a mob of Mials, or Wild Blacks—naturally with no good intentions. He tried to rouse Bottle-Green to a sense of the danger, but his attempts appeared for a while utterly futile. Suddenly something in a dream disturbing him, Bottle-Green jumped high up into the air with a terrific yell, and so frightened the Blacks that they rushed off, leaving their spears, waddies, &c., behind them. The two men roared for fully half an hour, and the belated dreamer explained he thought he was being challenged to a fight at Ballinasloe fair!

When the rush to the Gloncurry gold diggings broke out, the Cob was well to the front, but this time as a storekeeper. The Townsville (Cleveland Bay) rush had followed on that of Bowen (Port Denison), and then came the Burketown rush. Rings were formed and all the land bought up for miles, but the floods came down, drowned out many squatters and settlers, while the rest took refuge on Sweers Island. Then the Gloncurry gold diggings broke out and every one rushed there. Donald Simpson and the Cob opened a store and a pub called the "Curse

of God." They did good business; they did all the carrying trade with their own teams; they planted (i.e. hid) all strangers' cattle that came their way, for they knew the country and they were making a pile. But there was a man of the name of Reid who had on previous occasions assisted them in a small way and who was now in difficulties owing to some bad land speculations. His chief creditors, Towns and Co., threatened to foreclose on him. In his trouble he went to the Cob and his mate and they agreed to help him, and this they did by giving him a bill of sale over their store which Reid was to show Towns in order to let them see that he still had money behind him and so that they should give him time to realise. The next thing the Cob heard was that Reid had cleared out for San Francisco, having given the bill of sale to Towns and Co., whose agent was now about to take possession. It is said, with what truth I do not know, that in later years Reid was robbed by his nephews of his ill gotten gains. That by the way. When Towns and Co., threatened to take possession, Simpson was away and the Cob let all the diggers rifle the store, everyone taking what he liked. Whilst thus engaged Peter Armstrong and Dick Thatcher came along and the three men decided to join Daintree's surveying party, but they could not agree with him, for naturally Daintree was exploring for gold and was not prepared to share with such a large crowd. On leaving him they met Jim the "hatter," a man who hated his fellows and always worked for himself. He was fossicking (searching for gold) on his own account and on their arrival he said, "The whites have arrived so I must move on," which he did and left them. In the meanwhile Daintree, following the three men's tracks, came to where they were working gold, and, as they alleged, proclaimed the locality a new goldfield and obtained the Government reward. Diggers are full of such like grievances which may be true are not. I give the story as it was given me.

When Simpson returned and found the store sold up and the cattle straying in all directions, he collected what he could and planted them. He then told Towns' agent that if they would give him one team he would spring the whole plant and bring them the cattle back. To this the agent agreed. Simpson chose one team and mustered all the rest, of which Towns' agent took possession. Then Simpson bought another team from the agent and started after the Cob. He found the latter digging with the others but not doing himself much good. Simpson was better off and would not allow this, for they had been "dividing mates" and he insisted on the partnership with the Cob continuing. They "touched flesh" (i.e. shook hands) and were "pards" once more. Then they opened a store forty miles lower down the river at Spear Creek and also of course a pub. The signboard was a roughly drawn picture of a man getting through a hole in the globe and the inscription ran "Help me through the world." They did well until one unlucky day a man named Three

Fingered Jack and his mate, the Sleeping Lizard, came along. Jack went to their old store now belonging to Towns and Co., and presented an alleged order from Towns and Co., on the storekeeper there which the latter refused to acknowledge. Jack was a man who objected to obstacles on principle so he shot the storekeeper and helped himself to what he wanted. But this storekeeper was the man who had assisted Simpson to his teams and therefore a friend of Simpson, and the latter, on hearing of the death of his friend, hurried off after three Fingered Jack. No words were wasted. They fired as soon as they met and they both fell at the second exchange of shots. As they lay on the ground Simpson raised himself to give Jack a finisher, but Jack was just waiting for this, and fired. Then Simpson said he did not want any more, and very slowly he flickered out. When the Cob heard this he went for Jack who in the meanwhile had been planted by friends so that the Cob was done out of his revenge. Jack was afterwards jailed at the St. Helena penal settlement in Moreton Bay and when years afterwards I visited the island I inquired for him and the Sleeping Lizard, but one was dead and the other had been released.

A year or two earlier, or later, one afternoon while about to start out to look for lands on the Plains of Promise in the Gulf Country (Gulf of Carpentaria), the Cob and two mates crossed a river and got on to a piece of land in the fork of that and another river. It rained so hard that they determined to camp at once. They rigged up their tent, but the rain continued all the following day. While thus rainbound they made a "cart wheel" (a large "damper"), which they cooked under great difficulties inside the tent. It was still pouring when towards evening they found to their dismay that their horses, which had been left unhobbled in the belief that the river would be a sufficient bar to their returning on their tracks, had recrossed the river and disappeared. The rain continued and they woke up in the night to hear the gurgling of the water close to them, which at first they could not understand, as they had dug a ditch round their tent; but the fire got quenched and they soon found themselves lying in water. They lighted their pipes and tried to see about them. There was no end to the night apparently. It continued raining heavily. Snakes got amongst them and centipedes and beetles and other such like creatures got inside their shirts and added to the general discomfort. Still the rain came down.

By the second morning water was found 12 inches deep running over the ground, for the rivers having overflowed were now sweeping right across the pocket in the fork. They rigged up a sort of sapling scaffolding and placed their saddles, cart wheel, sugar, baccy, etc., thereon, but it took them all day to do this in the pouring rain, and by the time they had got settled on the platform the current nearly threw them off their legs. The day had been dark with the clouds which covered the sky, and sheets upon sheets of water came

down, apparently never to leave off any more, and the river was still slowly rising. When night arrived they were benumbed, hungry and shivering, but they did their best to cheer up each other. Dead and broken trees came crashing past all night, and occasionally these shook their retreat and they imagined every moment to be their last. The water was rising yet; they heard the yells of beasts, the splash of falling trees and apparently the cries of man and bird; and the roar of the rain and the rush of the water continued literally the livelong night. The darkness was black as pitch, and all they could see was the glare of one another's pipes, which they must keep going, as the matches were all wet. On the third morning the water was higher up, and Jim swam to a tree close by and climbed up, being held by a rope made by joining saddle straps, reins, stirrup leathers, etc., together; the Cob and Sam followed and hauled up the remains of the cartwheel and their wet blankets, and when there they strapped themselves on to the branches for fear of falling into the water. This move occupied them all day nearly. In the afternoon it was raining still, and the water was still rising. Shrieks and cries had long since ceased—less trees came bumping against their gum trees, there was less crashing of falling giants; there was only the endless, appalling, maddening rain. They attempted to keep up a conversation, but found they were troubled with forgetfulness and appeared to be at cross purposes. Sam then got weak in the head; he raved and talked of home; he thought he was lost in the bush dying of thirst, and the sun was hot overhead; he imagined that succour came but missed them. He despaired. Then he regained his senses for a bit and they all agreed to make their wills in the Cob's note book, every one of the three bequeathing to the survivor or survivors all they possessed or might be heirs to. They signed and witnessed one another's signatures. Then Sam, having settled his earthly accounts, got gloomy again, and before the others could prevent him he unstrapped the leather belt fastening him to the tree and calling out "Good-bye" dropped into the water. "Homeward bounder" said Jim laconically, and the Cob remembered afterwards that they both laughed! The last of the cartwheel had now been consumed, the sugar had been washed away, the pipes were out, but plenty of tobacco was left; this they began to chew. The fourth day opened, and sheets of rain still came down in endless succession. They felt sick through chewing tobacco without having any food, and were benumbed with cold. They dozed occasionally, woke up fitfully, and called out to each other "Hold on! If Death is to come he will; no need to go to meet him!" But the rain was still one continuous downpour, and the long night after the long day seemed darker than ever. Rain, rain, rain, rain; would it never cease! The cold and wet benumbed them more and more; they could now only speak in whispers, and were too weak to hear each other on account of the noise of the rain. With great effort on awakening from a fitful half sleep they tried to touch each other to see if one or the

other was still there. The fifth morning dawned. Sick and paralysed with cold, almost speechless, staring wildly at each other, the two men still hoped on. It was raining less by now, and a dim light struggled through the clouds. Then the rain ceased for a while. It began again. It lessened. It stopped altogether. The light in the heavens increased, the clouds finally dispersed, and the bright glorious sun shone forth on a couple of miserable, almost senseless bodies.

A distant "cooe" was heard. It was repeated. A Black fellow on horseback on a distant hillock cracked his stockwhip, the smart shot of which, magnified by the now calm, clear atmosphere, echoed and re-echoed amongst the trees. The "cooe" was repeated time after time. The Cob gradually awakened to the sound; he called hoarsely to his mate, "Jim, Jim, d'ye hear? Help is coming, Jim. God is good!" The effort overcame him, and after some time Jim was able to gasp out, "You're going after Sam. Stop yer jabber. It's all up man!" the words being jerked out at intervals in a hoarse whisper. After a while the Cob awoke again, and saw a naked Black climbing the tree, then a second, then a third. "God is good," he kept on muttering. Jim awakened, and was about to curse everything in his usual way when one of the Blacks poured some oatmeal water down his throat, and the first words the Blacks uttered took the form of a request for some tobacco! At the foot of the tree stood Gorston, a squatter, who had crossed the river on a rough raft, the horses having warned him to look out for bushmen in trouble. The two men were let down and quickly transported to the station. Here Gorston looked after them,

placing them on sapling beds on his veranda, and fed them every five minutes or so with spoonfuls of milk and water. The men craved for more, but he declined to give it them. Half wild, half mad, they thought Gorston wished to kill and eat them and they cursed him until they were too faint to curse any more. Gorston only smiled, and as the Cob told me afterwards, his own mother could not have done more for them. At the head of Jim's bunk there was a pile of jerked beef. Jim saw this and when Gorston left them for a while he tried to make for it; the Cob did the same. Their eyes stared out of their hollow sockets; their lips were swollen and their limbs so completely paralysed that they could not even raise their hands to their chests. Jim, eyeing this beef, got madder and madder; he wriggled and twisted and turned until suddenly he slid on to the floor; then he wriggled again until at last he reached the beef. Then like a wild beast he jawed at it, tearing off pieces which would choke an ordinary man, all the while grunting with an appeased satisfaction like any wild beast. At the same time the Cob was vainly striving to get out of his bunk, but a sapling stake prevented him, and not being able to do so owing to the uselessness of his limbs he howled with vexation in spite of the state of his throat. This brought Gorston on to the veranda. He rushed up to Jim, made him disgorge as much as possible, and replaced him on the bunk. Soon afterwards Jim was dead, and the Cob was on a fair way to recovery.

The pocket-book was opened a week or two later, but the wills were illegible, and the Cob could not remember the surnames of either Jim or Sam, if he ever knew them.

VI.—BLACKS AND KANAKS.

Years ago it was common belief that the Australian Blacks had neither Government, Religion nor Morals, and the frequent attacks they used to make on the Whites, in which the latter did not always come off best, was considered sufficient proof as to the correctness of the belief. The investigations of such men as Howitt, Fison, Gillen, Baldwin Spencer, Walter E. Roth and others have, however, shown that these aborigines were governed by a very complex and strict code of laws. With this knowledge, Europeans begun little by little to treat them with some of the respect and humanity they were entitled to, and for the last 20 years or more the Australians have made an honest endeavour to improve their lot. All the same, the results are not encouraging. It still remains impossible to bridge over the gap of the thousands of years which separates our civilisation from theirs. It is this gap which militates against their assimilating our ways and so saving themselves from extermination, however much we may strive to avoid, and must ever regret, such a fate for them. They are quite unable to overcome the restriction of their nomadic habits. The wearing of clothes is fatal to them.

To the break-up of their own system of government is largely due the annihilation which must in the next hundred years overtake those in close contact with Europeans.

The restriction put on their wanderings is due to the inevitable fencing-in of the land which deprives them of the healthy exercise and hardships of the chase and the mental stimulus necessary for their physical welfare, besides increasing the risk of starvation. The use of clothing is little understood by them. They wear them only near the settlements where they are forced to do so for decency's sake, and then they wear them, wet or dry, until they rot off their bodies. Underwear, the introduction of which Sir Edward Tylor considers one of the greatest sanitary inventions ever made is, of course, still less appreciated. But, when all is said and done, the Blacks are quite justified in their objection to wearing clothes, for to a people who have never yet worn them, garments upset their physical equilibrium and are the source of all sorts of chest and bowel complaints. Students of ethnology are generally agreed that clothing originated rather in a desire

to embellish the body than as a means for obtaining warmth or from a feeling of decency. Hence the Blacks, like many other savages, are more prone to decorate their bodies than to clothe them, and so we had the Queensland gin who, once, some 30 years ago, getting hold of an assortment of ladies' clothing, chose to appear in the streets of Port Mackay dressed in a pair of corsets and a parasol!

As regards the destruction of the Blacks' government by the simple advent of the Whites, as above referred to, it was a disaster which can never be repaired. It was a clean sweep, and for a long time no continuous effort was made to replace their strictly enforced code. At the present moment many attempts are being made to graft another into its place, but the difficulties are insuperable, although in other ways missionaries, no doubt, do good. What can one think of the religious convictions of a Black, or, indeed, of anyone, who will offer to repeat the Lord's Prayer for a stick of tobacco! People with such an utter absence of the understanding necessary to appreciate the meaning of such a prayer had much better be left alone. But perhaps the inherent difficulties of grappling with this section of the Black's mind are most strikingly set forth in the following little episode told by a lady whose name, I am sorry to say, I have forgotten. This lady lived in the Northern Territory, and relates of a Black, who had been christened Charlie, that he was one Friday caught by the priest eating meat. On being remonstrated with, he denied he was eating meat. Naturally, the priest, after satisfying himself that the food partaken of was meat, accused Charlie of having added a lie to his sin. But Charlie's answer was quite clear: "You been chuck'm water along o' me, call'm me Charlie. Me been chuck'm water along o' beef, call'm fish!"

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Among the indentured Kanakas on one of the numerous plantations of Port Mackay, there was a bearded, powerfully built Mai Islander. He appeared to be made of iron muscles. Bob knew his strength and acted on his knowledge. He was a real savage, morose, illtempered, and a terrible bully, and, latterly, as he was nearing the term of his three years' service he seemed to become day by day less manageable. He had more than once spent a few days in the local jail for assaulting his fellow labourers and more than once, too, the estate manager, who was afraid of no one, had been obliged in self-defence to knock him down. But that was rather a dangerous game to play, for old Goodall, the local Stipendiary, who was likewise Protector of the South Sea Islanders, held strong views in cases where anyone took the law into his own hands. In fact he never visited the planters because, as he said, he might at any time have to sit in judgment on them! One young overseer, if still alive, will doubtless remember his astonishment when he got a fortnight in the lock-up for striking a Kanaka. On the same plantation there was also a Mallicollo lad, perhaps about 16 or 17 years of age, a rheumatic cripple, who could only hobble about and whose chief occupation was the sewing up

of the sugar bags and such like light work. He was of a cheerful and happy disposition, he was obliging and good at his work and a general favourite. About this time several Kanakas were being replaced by a fresh lot, mostly from Pentecost, amongst whom were a quiet, inoffensive couple, a man named Vadim and his wife Wattereliblib.

At these changes there was always a considerable amount of excitement and, if the night were moonlight, the singing and the drum thumping round the fires in front of the huts and barracks would be carried on almost to day-break, and in a general way plantation rules were relaxed a bit. When the schooner had sailed the Kanakas calmed down, and soon the normal routine of the work went on as before.

One dark evening, however, about 8 o'clock, as most of the Kanakas were settling down to sleep, there suddenly arose a series of terrific yells, and before anyone knew what had happened a considerable amount of blood had been shed. The estate manager was away, and on the first yell the head overseer hurried down to the Kanaka quarters, and as he rushed along yell succeeded yell, and the cries and screams grew worse. There he found the boys in an extreme delirium of excitement and fury. They were armed with bows and arrows, guns, rifles, tomahawks, cane knives and clubs, dressed in war paint, without any dress at all, stark naked, and ready as it seemed to murder anyone and everyone, and why they didn't the overseer does not understand to this day. Two dead boys lay on the ground close together, and Bob lay unconscious a few yards off with the blood freely flowing from his head, as it was still doing from the heads of the two others. The yelling and gesticulating kept on breaking out in periodical volleys, and in their dancing frenzy the Kanakas, by the glare of the fires, looked like demons let loose from hell—there was no other comparison possible. As soon as some of the quieter ones noticed the overseer they crowded round, but the din was so awful that for a time he could not make out what they wished to say. Little by little the story was told. It seems Bob had attempted to take liberties with Wattereliblib, and Vadim in his fury, and probably feeling like a stranger among thieves, had taken up the nearest crowbar and cracked Bob's skull. Unfortunately it did not end here—he ran amuck. He likewise knocked over another boy; and the poor little cripple who was crossing the road and unable to get out of the way was killed by a blow on the back of his head. Vadim then decamped. The doctor, "Old Plaster," as he was called, was sent for to dress the wounds of Bob and some others who were slightly injured, but it was not till nearly daybreak that anything like order was restored.

The fate of Vadim was a sad one. For a time he appears to have taken refuge in a bit of scrub on the top of a ridge running out from below Mielere House, for at least one of the stockmen rounding up the working bullocks stated he saw him there, but when the overseer went in with some Kanakas, no trace of his

could be found. This was unsatisfactory, for it was not pleasant knowledge that this hungry madman was sheltering in a scrub so close to the house. Yet he really was there, for about three months later some of the "boys" discovered his bleached bones, picked perfectly clean by the ants, lying under a sheltered edge in this same scrub. Near the poor fellow's skeleton were his hoe, the remains of sugar cane which he had chewed, and his grooved fire stick, with which he seems to have made a small fire.

What became of Wattereliblib was never ascertained. She was brought back once from Rockhampton, whither she had walked along the coast; but she got away again and then twice afterwards a wild Kanaka woman was met with on the coast near Port Curtis. She evidently thought she could get back to her native island, Pentecost, but of course she never reached it.

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Some 48 years ago a small party of Blacks were feasting off the carcase of a recently killed heifer which they had driven into a ti-tree swamp, and there speared to death. They were having a "blow out" such as they had not enjoyed for a long time. Owing to the advent of the white man, the native fauna, on which the Blacks had hitherto mainly depended for their food, was being rapidly destroyed, as the newcomers wanted the grass for their cattle and sheep. The country could not afford subsistence to both the white man's herds or flocks and the kangarus, or other ground game, if we may use such a term, and hence the latter had to be wiped out. Hunger knows no law, and the destruction of the game caused the tribes to trespass on one another's hunting grounds, and this led to quarrels and fights, which tended to diminish the number of the Blacks. All the same, their diminished numbers were still suffering from insufficient food and the temptation to kill the white man's cattle and sheep, when they once understood the nature of the beasts, was only to have been expected. A few days after the above feast some stockmen in search of wandering cattle came upon the remains. The Native Police were called out, the wretched natives were surprised, driven into the swamps and, in official parlance, "dispersed." Some escaped and joined friendly tribes, and a few, under the leadership of a young Black named Duncan, fled the district for a while.

A swagman coming along a few hours after the "dispersal," discovered a little Black girl hidden or hiding in the long grass. His first thoughts were to let it die where it was, but better ones prevailed, and he carried off the frightened little gin, handing it over to Mrs. Atherton, the wife of a squatter, as he passed Plane Creek Station next day. Here she was taken care of until about the year 1879, when becoming of marriageable age she was by mutual consent made wife to a Black named Charlie.

Upon this Duncan, now an elderly savage belonging to a tribe then located at Collaroy, and knowing that the gin would be no longer under

the protection of Mrs. Atherton, said he would claim her, as she originally came of his tribe. Charlie, hearing this, thought it best to be prepared, so he got out his gun and, whilst cleaning it, it went off, blowing away two of his toes. This accident obliged him to keep more or less in camp for a time. Then a second misfortune overtook him: his gin's clothes caught fire, and he, being unable to assist the poor woman, she died of her injuries. When Charlie recovered he considered the matter very carefully, and going back mentally to ascertain the original cause of his troubles, concluded thus: "If Duncan had not threatened to take my gin away, I should not have taken out my gun, I should not have had this accident, nor shot off my toes, and if I had not shot off my toes I should have been in a position to help my gin when she caught fire, and she would not have died. Really, therefore, Duncan killed her, and I will kill him."

He consulted with three friendly Blacks who borrowed guns from the stations where they were located, on the pretence of wanting to shoot some dingoes. They attempted to stalk Duncan, who was a wary warrior and not easily caught, but at last one night they stumbled across tracks which led to his camp, and a member of Duncan's tribe, one who had a "down" on his chief, pointed out Duncan's bark humpy. This Charlie entered, and going up to Duncan, who was comfortably asleep, let drive and fled. The bullet went through the victim's shoulder and lodged in one of his ribs—all the same the man recovered. Charlie very much regretted that he did not kill him right off, but as he said gleefully to me, "My word, he plenty sing out!" After this, Charlie and his tribe were afraid to stir from the neighbourhood of their station house for fear of being murdered by Duncan and his friends, and that is where we must leave them, for I never heard the sequel.

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It was hot! Very hot! Beastly hot! thought the new chum, or Jackeroo, as he got up and skimmed the scum off the brine seething in a cauldron over a wood fire, the smoke from which every now and then got into his eyes. Then he lighted his pipe and sat down until another hot breeze sent the smoke his way again; when he got up and began to salt the beef in the shed close by at the back. Taking a handful of salt he rubbed it well in, first with one hand and then with the other, until his new chum hands began to feel sore, for, although he had been out some months, his hands had not yet hardened as they did do before very long. Then he poured the skimmed brine into a cask ready to receive the beef he was salting and set a fresh lot of old brine to simmer over the fire. Although sheltered from the sun by a lean-to, the fire seemed to give out little heat, and the weather seemed so hot that he thought the water would simmer just as well without the fire.

He was having his first little experience of a minor Queensland drought. Only a few days ago he had come up with a party of three men, and on the way their water bags had all gone

dry within a couple of hours after starting, and no prospects of replenishment, as creek after creek was found to be dried up. Thirst is harder to bear than hunger, and the party suffered accordingly. Many dead cattle were passed, but there was little stench, so quickly had the sun done its work. While jogging along the track under this awful sun barely speaking a word, all too much engrossed with their own moody thoughts, the new chum, as well as others, imagined every now and then that he could see water ahead through the shadowless gum trees, and more than once, as the horses trampled on dead and crumpled leaves, the sound seemed to convince him they were splashing through water—while his ears deceived him, his almost dried-up eyes and swollen tongue still proclaimed the unwelcome truth. At last they approached a creek which was said never to run dry and, the horses neighing and accelerating their pace, the men were justified in expecting to find water. When they got to the creek the horses, with noses eagerly examining its bed, could find none. They pawed the ground to no purpose, and men cannot dig very deep with their fingers and boots. Then two of the men sat down and blubbered, but the old bushman with them had been in worse plights than this and, telling the two men to wait where they were, he sent the new chum up the creek to look for water, he himself going down the creek on the same errand. After half an hour's eager search the new chum's horse began to sniff and hurry up, and before its rider had time to realise where he was, the horse was plunging in thick-caked mud at the edge of a stinking black scum-covered pool of water. Quickly dismounting and looking at nothing but the puddle, the new chum lay down on the muddy bank and steadying himself by a limb of the dead tree, whose shelter had preserved the water, he drank the sweetest drink he had ever drunk in his life! On struggling up he noticed the body of a dead dingo within a foot of the place where he had been drinking, but he was too thankful for the drink, or perhaps, too dazed to care for anything but the drink to quench his thirst. The horse, now also satisfied, had some difficulty in getting out of the mud. Quickly filling his water bag, the new chum returned on his tracks, cooeing as he rode, to let the others know he was coming; but the old bushman was there with water before him. It was, of course, nothing much of an experience to what others have gone through, but all the same this first experience of the want of water impressed itself deeply on the young man's memory.

But to return to his present occupation the new chum was left alone now because his horse had gone lame yesterday, and the other horses wanted a rest. It had been a hard day, for every time the gathered mob of cattle had been brought up to the yards they had broken back, led by an old cow, in spite of all that the stock-riders, amidst a din of cracking stock-whips, yells and barking dogs could do. The old hands would have it that this breaking back was due to the Blacks now encamped not far off, near the gorge, who had been passing that way shortly before, and whose tracks the

cattle would not cross. However, in the end the mob was safely yarded, and, after more than the usual dodging, the termagant cow isolated, preparatory to being driven up the bail where the slaughterer was ready for her with his rifle. The unexpected then happened and the cow, suddenly veering round, took a running leap at the rail yards and landed in a heap outside, smashing the top rail as she did so, where the slaughterer, not to be balked, there and then ran up and shot her. The sudden charge had startled some of the horses, and the new chum's mare, putting her foot into a hole, lamed herself. It was the beef of this cow, cut up early in the morning, that he was now salting down.

In spite of the cruel sun the situation was not an unpleasant one, facing as it did the grand little sheet of water, Lake Emilia. The banks, covered with pieces of fossil wood, sloped leisurely down to the water's edge, where the lake was broad and fairly shallow, while at the southern end it narrowed and broke through the rock forming a steep gorge. It was the source of the Isaacs, a tributary of the great Fitzroy River. Beyond the opposite banks, the new chum could see among the peaks the pass known as Leichardt's gorge, which he is supposed to have traversed with his party in 1846. That he missed this pretty little lake can only be understood by supposing that its waters were then dried up, for, since its discovery by Warden Selheim, its water level has ebbed and flowed between extremes. In 1870 the water was so high that it reached the squatter's house, and he had some thoughts of removing further away. Ten years later it was a long walk from the house to the water's edge. The whole country round is rich in metals. Some copper works were humming a few miles away, and if much gold had not been found a good deal of it had been lost.

The new chum had not been long at his soul-stirring job when the report of a gun fired at the gorge end of the lake came ricocheting across the water. The cockatus stopped their screeching for a moment, and the wallarus stopped lopping about to listen, while the horses stampeded and various discordant bird sounds followed in quick succession, and teal and duck and geese rose and flew off, and the clumsy pelicans, with head well set back, wheeled several times round the lake before they could make up their minds to settle down again. The new chum rose uneasily, and scanning the lower end of the lake, saw three Blacks come out the scrub, evidently in a merry mood. He knew he was to be left alone for at least two days, and so felt more than a little troubled. Still, he had had hardly any experience of the Blacks, and, like all new chums, considered them childish and harmless. He could not run away even if he wished to, and besides, they must have seen him. As they approached he noticed one of them had a small bundle of clothes and another was dragging a double-barrelled gun along by the barrel, the stock of which was bumping on the ground. On asking where they had got these articles one replied, "Bel (No) you tell'm, you

good fellow; bel you tell'm; me been spearin' pig; bel you tell'm; me been kill'm Kanaka!" and asked for some "tumbacco." The new chum gave the tobacco readily—in fact he would have given everything in the world to induce them to go away—and then bit by bit he got to understand that a Kanaka who had run away from the coast had come up to their camp and would not go away. A fight had ensued and the Kanaka had been tomahawked, and, for fear the native police might find out what had happened, they threw his body into the lake, but childlike had kept his clothes and the other things they coveted. This had taken place the night before, and the gun had only just gone off when one of them was handling it. This made the new chum look more closely at the weapon, when he found the second barrel still loaded, and by good luck the Blacks let him fire it off. After a good

feed the Blacks moved off, and later in the day a swagman, seeing a good gun in the hands of some Blacks, offered them five shillings for it. But they wanted rum, so he gave them rum and they all got tight, squabbling and fighting and cutting themselves terribly.

The next day, as the new chum was examining his mare's sprained fetlock, a digger came along inquiring if he had seen a Kanaka who a few nights before had broken into his shanty and stolen a double-barrelled gun and some clothes. The new chum had, of course, seen no such Kanaka, and the search by the police afterwards was in vain. But some years later, when the waters of the lake were again drying up, a skeleton was found near the gorge with a deep gash in the skull. No notice was taken of it, as it was thought to be that of a Black. But the new chum knew better.

Russia :---Forty Years Ago.

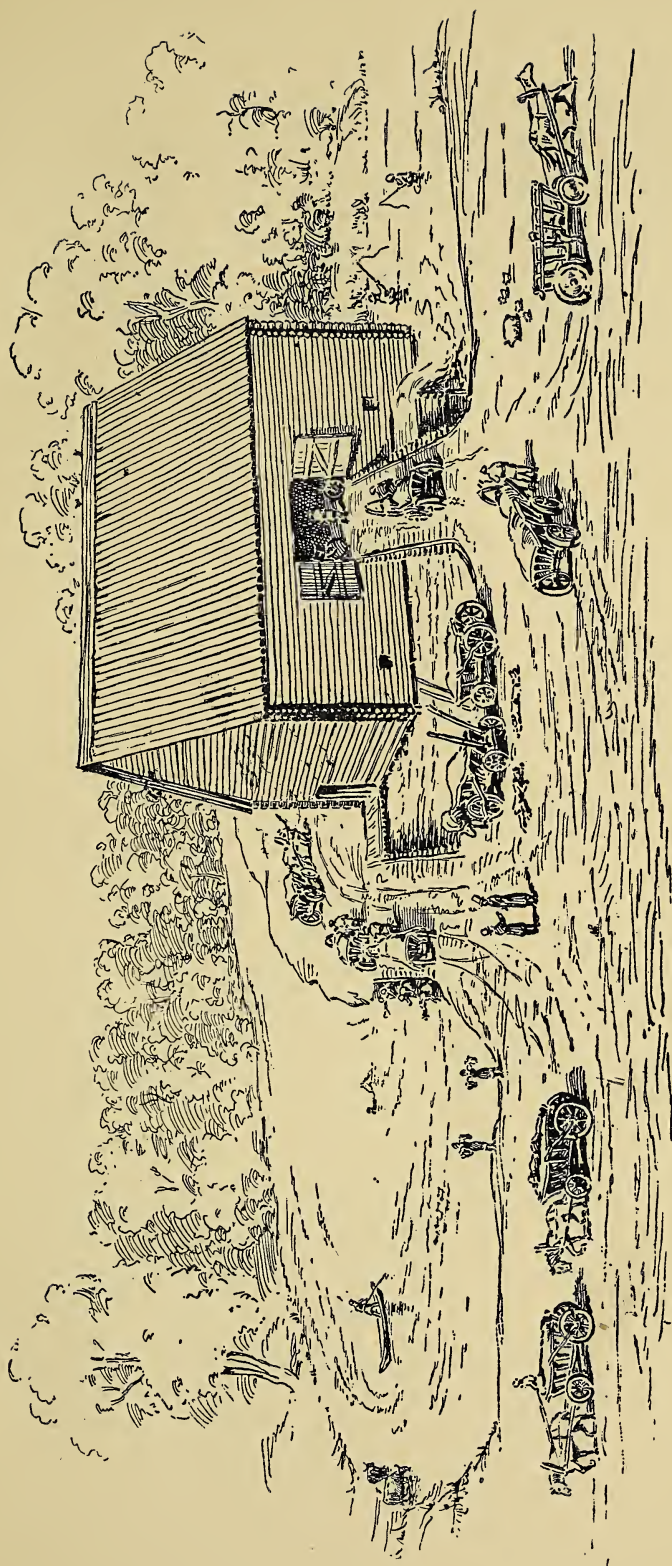
I.—INTRODUCTORY NOTE.

It was in the spring of 1876 after paying a visit to the great book fair at Leipzig that I started on my way to Russia, my route being via Breslau and Warsaw. I found Warsaw a beautiful city, but what impressed me much was the romantically situated theatre in the park with the platform and orchestra stand on one side of the water and the seats for the audience on the other side. One is curious to know what would be the effect of a representation or concert under such an arrangement. It was said to be good. I was also struck by the numberless handsome and intelligent-looking men and women with which the city abounded. From Warsaw to Moscow the railway went and still goes via Minsk and Smolensk, practically the route taken by Napoleon in his mad attack on Russia and it still leads through a dreary, loveless, swampy and wooded country. The almost complete absence of human beings was remarked, both by myself and fellow passengers.

In Moscow I put up at Billo's Hotel. The proprietor, Billo, was a German. He had bushy white hair and was the picture of a venerable, kind hearted gentleman and his whole manner had a charm which to this day I have not forgotten. But, in spite of his benevolent looks, he deliberately misinformed me that the Volga was not yet open to traffic, misleading me in order to keep me in his hotel. Some German merchants, however, who knew their countryman, very kindly gave me more correct information. Owing to this delay I did not reach Nizhni-Novgorod in time to go down the Volga by the first steamer, but managed to get on board the second or third boat going south. The real town of Nizhni-Novgorod, the seat of the great

fair, lies on a bluff above the junction of the Kama and on my arrival the land to the north, east and south was almost one immense sea, the result of the melting of the snow with the approach of spring. We raced down the Volga, frequently shaving submerged tree tops swaying in the turbulent waters and in so far there was some excitement in the journey. This huge river had also not yet been properly lighted up for the summer traffic and as our captain, an elderly naval man, pushed on light or no light, as evening came on, I thought many a time he was driving the steamer into some huge black wall. But the scenery itself in daylight is unattractive and I was, apart from the novelty of my surroundings, glad to get to my destination, the town of Samara.

Since then during my two years stay I travelled several times up and down the river and managed occasionally to get a bit of fun out of it. If in spring the speed going down was risky and exhilarating, in autumn it was risky and tedious. Towards the end of summer the river bed was full of shoals and islands above which in the spring the boats had floated some 20 to 25 feet overhead and where now the rank grass was being converted into hay by the peasants. It was slow going then, but life on the steamers was made more interesting by the numerous Oriental passengers going to, or coming from, the great fair. When the water is very low especial care has to be taken, for, to use an apt Russian expression, the steamer may "sit down" almost anywhere. Once missing the passenger boat (there used to be, two excellent passenger services) I took passage in a semi-cargo boat and she sat down for something like 20 hours. I was



GENERAL VIEW OF THE MILL AT TIMASHEVO, SAMARA, RUSSIA, AS SEEN FROM THE ESCARPMENT
ON WHICH OUR HOUSE STOOD.



PEASANT WOMAN RETURNING FROM WASHING CLOTHES AT THE RIVER.



NOW BROTHER, DON'T BE CROSS!

travelling with a young Russian and as we found the delay slow we got out and walked about a bit—then the boat suddenly rose and left. We continued our walk!

The worst of these cargo boats is the quantity of rats they carry, but perhaps the pest is not worse in them than it is in the districts further south where mud huts are the rule. At Timashevo, where I lived, some thirty miles east of Samara on the other side of the Volga, I have often had to get up in the night and drive them away from my bedside candle. So numerous were they that they used to show fight. But on this cargo boat we amused ourselves by lying quite still in our bunks and waiting for a rat to scramble over our feet, when with a sudden kick we sent it flying; if the kick was successful the rat was caught with a whack on the underside of the deck boards above us. Once with the same companion on the banks of this river when we were just mooching round amusing ourselves watching beekeepers depositing their hives and swarms in the sand caves for the winter, we thought a sail across the river would not be amiss; but the boat leaked and we finished our journey by wading, dragging the indecent vessel after us; this was not all, however, for no sooner had we landed than a disrespectful bear sent us hurriedly back into the water. It must have been a charming sight—five men shivering in a semi-circle in the water waiting to see what the shortsighted bear would do next. We yelled at him, and abused him, then suddenly he slowed round and shuffled off.

On another occasion, while the big railway bridge just below Samara was being built, and we were waiting for the ferry, I left my fellow passengers with a Ural Cossack friend to have a bathe. This man when we were in Moscow used to go up to the police and sing a verse of the Marseillaise to them and when in answer to his inquiry, whether they knew what it was, he received the usual negative reply, he told them it was the finest anthem ever written! We got into the water where some boatmen very rudely tried to row us down thinking we were Germans. To my friend this was a grand opportunity for inveighing against the Russian Government for he was a Ural Cossack and he did it with a will. This confirmed the men in the idea that we were Nyemzi, or Germans, so they tried to get at us with their oars and we made for the shore, not thinking the fishermen would follow us. But they did and we had just managed to get into our boots when they were upon us. But the Cossack more accustomed to pummeling than the boatmen were gave a great deal more than he received, but sides were pretty even until they suddenly sheered off and nimbler than we were, out of revenge, they took our clothes with them. Fortunately there were no snapshooters in those days.

When the railway from Samara to Orenburg was built more than once we induced the engine-driver and guard to stop the train so that we could shoot hares—the “we” including, of course, the officials. It was at this time too that I began to understand the philosophy of bakshish!

When the line was opened for traffic the Orenburg merchants found they could dispatch the grain cheaper by rail than by road. The first trains laden with wheat came through all right but soon out of every twenty or thirty such trucks that left Orenburg, two or three were always missing on the arrival of the train at Samara. The merchants had not paid bakshish. Being Russian they ought to have known better.

While this was going on I had been purchasing some timber at Samara and had ordered it to be sent by rail to our nearest station. Not arriving when it should have done I went to the station to see about it. There I saw what I believed to be my timber awaiting me. “Oh no, that is not yours,” said the stationmaster and, in spite of my protests that it was mine, he held out that it wasn’t. But he was politeness itself and promised to forward mine as soon as it arrived. Two mornings later I got a note saying my timber had been lying several days at the station and it would be delivered on receipt of the amount due for demurrage. I had forgotten the stationmaster’s bakshish.

My next experience in the matter of bakshish was pleasanter. The tax collector had overcharged us most outrageously so we invited him to pay us a friendly visit and spend the night with us. A good dinner with plenty of sweet champagne and a twenty rouble note made him our bosom friend and the burden of taxation slid comfortably off our shoulders.

Before finally leaving Russia I stayed a while in Moscow and, deciding to leave a few days earlier than I had originally intended, I went with my landlady to the police station to get my passport cleared. “It must be left here three clear days,” was the reply of the chief. “But I want to be off to-morrow.” “It must be left here three clear days,” came the inflexible answer. “Very well,” said my landlady, “then we must wait,” and, as she walked out of the office before me, she dropped on to the table a three rouble note, value then about six shillings. “It will be all right if you call to-morrow morning” she said to me when we were outside. And all right it was! It must be remembered I am writing of Russian experiences of forty years ago, and such matters occur even in other countries.

The peasants with whom I had to deal were a good set of fellows, more sinned against than sinning, but densely ignorant and superstitious. At the beginning of the Russo-Turkish war there were all sorts of rumours of an English invasion, and this at a place 30 miles or more to the east of the Volga—that is to say about 2,000 miles (or 3,200 kilometres) from London. One day (having gone into the town for the winter to study Russian grammar) I received a post haste summons to go out to the estate. The peasants wanted to break into the house as they had heard the English had built a tunnel from England and the soldiers were coming up inside our house in order to take Russia! I showed them over the house and let them pull up the floor boards, but they were not easily convinced.

During that troublous time every one remarked how well the Tatars behaved, and this without any threat made or extra precautions taken by the Government. There was no need to do, and, if the Government had done so in any way, a fanatical revolt might have arisen. I did not see as much of them as I wished to as they lived more to the north and east of the districts I lived in and visited. They are a hard working, well-behaved people; their intelligence is greater than that of the Russian peasantry, but as there is less "go" in them their future is not so great as that of the Russians. The Tatars do not drink and their mollahs, unlike the Russian village priests, are of course teetotalers and preach against drunkenness. The Tatars take a very tolerant view of the Russians but they have the greatest contempt for drunkards. They are exceptionally hospitable and I enjoyed more than once excellent horse flesh stew in their homes with women watching me through the chinks in the wooden partitions.

East of Moscow and outside the towns, I only met one countryman of mine, Mr. T. E. Moberly, the representative of Messrs. Ransomes, Sims and Head, a very sterling man whose genial manner and uprightness was very much appreciated by the Russians. To the south at Saratov there was the very charming family of Mr. Gooldeen, the water-works engineer, likewise English.

I enjoyed living in Russia, and I left her and her people with great regret. The language was a difficulty at first, but the educated people could nearly all speak English or French; there were

many people who could speak German and there were the few educated German colonists, who made me very welcome and who in those days were still "gemuetlich." After all, the vocabulary of the Russian peasant is very limited and soon mastered. There are occasions, both in Russia and elsewhere however, when it is very useful not to know the local language at all.

There were some good things I would like to have brought back with me. There was the excellent sterlet soup as made by our gipsy cook; there was the delightful Turkish cigarette tobacco; and there was the tea which, for delicacy of flavour, can only be compared with that of the coffee which used to be served in the cafes on the Graben of the once gay city of Vienna. Of the town life I saw very little.

The few sketches which follow were written immediately after I left the country in December, 1877, and at the time I wrote my little book entitled "Notes on the Agriculuture and Peasantry of Eastern Russia." The dominant note is a sad one. It could not be otherwise in such an unfortunately misgoverned country as I found it to be at that time. Perhaps one of the results of the present war may tend to an improvement in the conditions of the people. In any case the sketches will, I hope, give the reader some notion of a few phases of the life of the peasants among whom I lived for close on two years, even if that occurred forty years ago. For all their ignorance, superstition and ways which are not our ways I still cherish a very great regard for the Russian Muzhik.

II.—A NE'ER DO WELL.

The village priest was dead. The "trisa" had been drunk, and the priests from the nearest village had departed after officiating at the funeral of his late brother. Ivan Ivamovitch, the dead priest had been a good natured man, fat and benevolent. He had never dealt hardly with the people placed under his care, that is to say in the bargainings between priest and peasant, which invariably precede the performance of any special religious ceremony, he had dealt with the man according to his circumstances and in bad times had even sold his services on credit much to the annoyance of Yosef Nestoritch, the spiritual brother who had just performed his obsequies. The latter had once in a time of drought and famine, suggested that the peasants should be allowed to starve as a punishment because a few had disguised themselves in order to obtain an extra share of the pittance allowed by the nearest landed proprietor. All the same Ivan had his little failings, and occasionally his wife had to call in the help of the deacon to put him to bed—which, as in all peasants' huts, is the top of the large brick stove. Now that he had passed away the peasants only remembered that he had not been a bad priest, and they speculated on the sort of man their new "papa" would be. It was, however, in the meantime an annoyance to be without a priest for, of

course, no ritual could be performed and they were somewhat afraid of Yosef Nestoritch, Maria Petrovna's baby died after the christening because Yosef had cursed the child, so they said, instead of blessing it, not having been successful in obtaining his full fee. So, while it did not much matter who their papa was so long as the religious services were properly conducted, in which the peasants find intense comfort, they would on the whole have preferred that Ivan Ivamovitch were still alive. There was, however, one man who had some satisfaction in the old priest's death, not that he in any way had a grudge against the old man. He wanted a dead priest to carry out one of his many villainies.

In this village there lived amongst others two fairly well to do peasants between whom there was apparent rivalry. It was, perhaps, hardly correct to call the state of affairs a rivalry because the richer of the two men Matvay Andrayitch troubled himself very little about the efforts the poorer man, Nikoai Martinitch, was putting forth to outstrip him in the race for wealth. Matvay Andrayitch was one of those comparatively rich men of which every village, which possesses one, is usually proud, and whose name was frequently used in intervillage disputes

to vindicate the village's honour in the possession of greater riches than any other village in the neighbourhood. The riches, however, did not amount to much. Matvay was the owner of the large corner house with a wooden roof all the others were thatch; the windmill on the neighbouring ridge was his, and he owned some 60 acres of land. One of the causes of his comparative ease lay in the fact that he had four sons, all of whom had married early and brought their wives and dowries home. The women worked as hard as the men, and the family, being already frugal, grew daily in the respect of the other villagers. Matvay himself had married somewhat late for a peasant, namely at the age of 22 to a girl some years his senior, and, although she had long since grown helpless, his rough affection for her was as strong as ever. In the old days of serfdom he had in every way commanded his master's respect, and with that old familiarity, which was perhaps one of the very few redeeming points in the bad old system, master and servant had been on very confidential terms. When the emancipation of the serfs took place, soon after the Crimean war, Matvay obtained a freedom which he had hitherto only dreamed about, and which he never thought to possess except by purchase. I have heard peasants speak with yearning after the good old days of serfdom, when their welfare did not absolutely depend on their work, but when, in any trouble they could turn towards their owner for assistance, and need not worry about the future. But Matvay was not of that sort. He and his former master remained good friends; he made good use of his newly acquired freedom and did not lose his head as did most of his fellow peasants. He was a member of the Old Greek Church as it existed before that devil in disguise, as he thought fit to call Peter the Great, reformed it. He neither drank nor smoked, which many peasants do to excess, when they get the chance. All the members of his family possessed their religious services books and, what is more could read them. Persecution, although generally warded off by bribery, had helped to give character to all the members of the family. In his way he was a little king, his genial face was everywhere welcome, disputes which might otherwise have ended sadly were settled by him, and on Sundays and the other too numerous religious holidays (which are a sad drawback to the progress of a country) he would sit for hours on his verandah, surrounded by his friends, discussing communal matters, all the while gravely arranging his hair and beard with a large comb which otherwise hung from his waistband, much after the style of that adopted by the courtiers of Charles II.

Nikolai was quite a different man. He was always in trouble about shady transactions and when found out would abjectly supplicate for pardon for any offence committed, knowing well that it had been intentional. At night he would steal hay or mow his neighbour's grass, hobble his horses on the pastures of the neighbouring noble, or cut down a tree and have the timber snugly stacked in his yard long before daylight. Once he was convicted of stealing some lead but as the police kept the lead instead of restoring

it to the prosecutor, on the plea that the ownership was not sufficiently proven (the foolish prosecutor not having come to terms over their bakshish), Nikolai always maintained that he had only found the lead, and the police had robbed him of it. His "domovoi" or house spirit, in the existence of which the peasant implicitly believes, was always playing pranks on him, while that of Matvay was as good a brownie as could be met with. It was very annoying to find his horses all of a sweat in the morning, owing to the domovoi having ridden them during the night, and most peasants on such occasions would have crossed themselves without daring to say a word. But Nikolai first of all implored the sprite to desist, and when that was no good he abused it for the son of a dog!

Of a notorious man many stories are told and the following is told of him although I have also heard it told in a general way to express the superstition of the peasantry. It is this:—One day he is said to have attended a great festival, All Saints, I think in the neighbouring town. At such times the church forms a brilliant, if barbaric, spectacle, lighted up with thousands of wax candles, every light from which is reflected in greater thousands of rays reflected from the gilt ikons which adorn the church. At such times the congregation is too dense for every individual to get to the front and place his votive candles before his own saint so they have to be passed on by hand with the message for St. Nicholas, Saint Helen, &c. Nikolai handed his taper to a man in front with the words "If you please to St. Nicholas." He watched his candle, or thought he did so, from hand to hand until finally it was placed, as he thought, not before St. Nicholas, but before St. Paul. "Confound it," he muttered, "to what imp are they giving my taper."

He naturally did not prosper and it was gall to him when at Mother Anna's or Marfa's, where the men assembled at holiday time to drink tea and the conversation occasionally turned on the question as to who was the best off in the village, to find he was not by any means reputed to be the best off and most of all did he feel a grudge against Matvay, who, good man, little dreamed how envied he was. If only he could get at Matvay's little store of roubles which he knew was secreted somewhere near the stove! He had heard a story from the Khakhli (Little Russians) that if a man obtained a candle made out of priest's fat he could get into any household at night without disturbing the inmates. The notion had taken firm hold of him and he had many times hoped some day to be able to try for himself a plan in which his ignorance placed every confidence. Ivan Ivanovitch, the priest, was now dead and here was his chance.

It did not take Nikolai long to make up his mind. The roubles were there waiting for him to fetch them away. It would be foolish to leave them. So at dusk he went to church, prayed for assistance in his enterprise, and as a special bribe lighted his best taper in front of St. Nicholas' ikon. Then when it was dark he crawled to the cemetery and began his unholy

work. He had not got far when a terrible shriek made him drop his tools and flee for his life. He tore away mad with fear that the Devil was after him, and in his fear he did not know where he went. Luckily for him he ran down towards a sluggish stream which wound its listless dried-up summer way through the plain, and crossing this tore on faster than before. But as his breath began to fail he began to think he was not being followed, and so slowing down he at last realised he was in reality quite alone, and that no spirit was after him. Then he re-

membered that the Devil cannot cross running water, and his fears were at rest. The shriek had aroused the whole village, and the peasants fearing a conflagration turned out "en masse." Nikolai was afraid of no one, except spirits, so he sneaked back, kept his own counsel and not till years afterwards was it discovered who had desecrated the old priest's grave. But Nikolai, who remained the same worthless fellow to the end, never could account for the shriek which drove him from his prey.

III.—IVAN ALEXANDROVITCH VENUTZOV.

The Story of a Grain Merchant.

Ivan lived at Bogdanovka, a small village in the Province of Vyatka (one of the great forest districts on the banks of the Kama, a tributary of the Volga), which supply the inhabitants the whole length of the Volga valley, as far south as Astrakhan, with the timber necessary for their buildings. Wood is so cheap there that it is said it may almost be had for the removal, but this is an exaggeration. Huge wooden barges laden with timber, carts, sledges, ready-made loghouses, a variety of furniture all ready to be put together, and firewood, annually pass down the river, never to return, for after the sale of their cargo the barges are broken up to feed, maybe, the stoves of Saratov or the furnaces of the steamers on the Caspian—but this was before the exploitation of the Baku oil wells.

It was on one of these heavily-laden barges bound for Volsk, now gliding down the Volga's snow augmented waters, that Ivan found himself forced to take work. Ivan had been a restless fellow, one whom even his father, with all the authority a Russian peasant exercises over his household, had been unable to keep within bounds. He was one of that numerous set of intelligent lads to be met with among the Russian peasantry who, quick with hands, speech and head, are always kicking against the limited field open to their energy, and continually chafing against the everlasting round of monotony to which they are subject. The peasants clear the land, which bears a couple of scanty rye crops, after which they let it lie fallow while they clear fresh land and repeat the old routine of ploughing, sowing and reaping. Often for want of work the men lie for weeks sleeping through their enforced idleness. Many, glad of a change, give their services in exchange for food and a passage on the great barges which begin to float down with the swollen spring waters, and few of the lads who have once tasted the pleasanter life further south ever return to the labour which once fed them. The wages in the south are comparatively high; apart from this, the roving life and fresh comrades are inducements enough to cause many to leave their dead-alive surroundings.

To Ivan the new life on board the barge was as congenial as it could be. The work was light, but that mattered little, for the Russian can and does work, while at night the men used to

collect round the fore-castle fire and recount the legends of the hills and the tales of the great robbers like Stenka Razin, who even defied the emperors. Ivan had run away from home. He had been sent by his father to sell a mare, whose glossy skin and well rounded limbs are popularly said to indicate dosing with arsenic rather than liberal feeding, and was returning home with the few roubles she had fetched when he fell in with some idle youths from a neighbouring village. With nothing to do and a few rare kopecks in their pockets they set to and gambled, and at the end of the evening Ivan found he had only a three kopeck piece left. After this he dared not return home, and, looking round to see what he could do, he luckily found a berth on board one of the timber barges.

Arrived at Volsk with his sheepskin coat, with others he crossed the river, and marched away to the German and Swiss Colonies where he was told he would find work. He wandered from one place to another, doing just enough not to starve, generally working for food, because there was little money in circulation, and he hardly ever stayed out his time. So he tramped along aimlessly, sometimes in company, sometimes alone. Once he took work amongst the Ural Cossacks. But these Cossacks were too fond of horseplay for him and too ready with their fisticuffs, so he retraced his steps and finally took service with an Elder of a German village, who set him to watch the troops of villagers' horses away at Novo-Elyuzan.

Novo-Elyuzan varies much from other Russian villages. The long straggling main street, the log huts and the green cupola of the Greek orthodox church are the same as elsewhere. But in one part the houses have no yards; there is a Saxon church with its single-armed cross; there are also several other peculiarities decidedly not Russian. The yardless houses, with the festoons of drying tobacco, belong to the German colonists, and in some such houses I have even seen the well-known German periodical, the "Gartenlaube," for the Germans do not mix with the Russians, considering themselves superior people. The goats and the women, who draw the veil at the approach of the stranger, are property of the Tatars, and the

strange-looking building is their mosque. It is essentially a village which is characteristic of Russia—the intimate mixture, but absence of amalgamation, of the various races which inhabit her extensive lands. Germans, Tatars, and Russians have probably lived together here for considerably over a century, yet while they all respect their neighbours' ways, they plod on after their own fashion. The German adheres to the system of cultivation his forefathers brought with them when they bid adieu to the Fatherland. The Tatar prefers his goats to any cows, and prepares an excellent dish of horseflesh. The Russian still dons his crude but picturesque costume.

Novo-Elyuzan lies on the high road from Novo-Uzensk to Volsk, and often when brought hither in search of a stray horse, Ivan caught sight of the ceaseless trains of grain-laden carts that, year in, year out, in wet or frost, were on the move towards the barges at Volsk. He could see how the wily cornfactors, originally no better than peasants, and now, in spite of their wealth, peasants still, waylaid other peasants and Tatars more ignorant than themselves. How the latter were cajoled and bullied into selling their grain at much below market value, but yet glad to get cash and to find themselves at their journey's end. But if Ivan wished to emulate the corn merchants' dealings with the peasants, still more did he envy their success in their dealings with the semi-nomad Khirghiz, who had taken to farming and who little understood the value of money. Wish and envy helped him little. The stray horse must be found, and it was waste of time to watch the merchants.

With the approach of his first winter in the south, Ivan went to Saratov, higher up the river. Here he met many of his former shipmates preparing to return home. Some, who had worked regularly on the estates they visited annually, had their pockets full. Some had only sufficient to pay their taxes and perhaps their winter's food and clothing. Some, like Ivan, had practically nothing. Ivan wished to return home, but without a kopeck how could he face his wife, much less his father, for was it not right that if he withdrew his labour from the household fund he should hand them money instead! His first winter away from home was spent in the close odoriferous workshops of a German furrier. This shrewd German was not long in discovering the value of his new clumsy-fingered workman and, had Ivan found the work at all to his mind, he might soon have risen to the rank of foreman of the shops, or even better. But he detested the confined air and the dull sewing and fitting, and when spring approached longed to be out again at his old roving life. The German was loth to part with him, and recommended him to an aged friend, who made him assistant bailiff on one of his estates. This life rather suited Ivan, who liked to lord it over his fellow-creatures. He retained this position for a few years, and when the old bailiff died, he was installed in the latter's place. For a time all went well enough, but Ivan's wages remained

much the same as they had been when he was first taken on.

Ivan, finding himself drawing so little pay, thought he would like to share in the profits to make up for it. The supervision of the transport of the grain was in his hands. This, and the easy morality of the grain merchants, enabled him soon to rob his master with impunity, so that before long he found himself growing comparatively rich. Hay was now frequently stolen and horses disappeared in a most mysterious manner, and, although efforts were made to discover the thieves, the horses were not recovered. Ivan robbed both his master and his master's servants. Short and bad rations were sent out from the store. The peasants' little wage books were falsified, and when they claimed their due he put them off by telling them, perhaps, he had lent them money when drunk, or any other excuse. In those days drink was a terrible curse on the people, and drink was an excuse for almost anything. The poor peasant, notwithstanding his firm conviction to the contrary, and after vain attempts to obtain his due, was obliged to go home with less than his rightful wages. Rumours of Ivan's behaviour reached the aged German far away in town, but accustomed to believe in that discontent of their lot which all Russian peasants, like British farmers, are supposed to cherish, he took no notice of the complaints until one day he was made suddenly aware that something was in reality wrong. It occurred this way. Some horses belonging to a neighbouring village had strayed during the night. Whether this was done with the connivance of their owners, which was most likely, or not, Ivan charged the owners an exorbitant sum for having had to impound them, and to make it appear that he was acting justly, he called some of the peasants together, explained what had happened, and mentioned what fine he had imposed.

"You see, children," said he, "our neighbours' horses are always straying and doing damage to our crops: they have waded through my corn, have eaten my hay, and trampled over the newly-sown wheat. Don't you think I am doing right in fining the owners heavily?"

"Yes, yes," shouted several voices, "the owners are rich, let them pay and to the devil with them."

They knew well enough that the fine was excessive, but it was worth while to have outsiders mulcted, if only to curry favour with Ivan, for he might then listen to their wants with a better grace. The owners, beseeched, begged, went on their knees for an abatement, but Ivan made them pay.

* * *

"Thank God," ejaculated Ivan, crossing himself many times as he escaped that night with bare life from the burning homestead and granaries of his master. He was indeed thankful for escaping with a whole skin, for had the injured peasants caught him he would have fared worse. The Russian peasant is a good-

natured fellow, and will stand a large amount of abuse and ill-treatment. His somewhat sluggish nature is not easily provoked, but, when aroused, he is a brute, like any other one of us. Thus Ivan had good cause for congratulation. He knew well enough that it was the owners of the impounded horses who had set fire to the buildings, most probably aided by some of the more long suffering men whom he had robbed of their wages from time to time. It did not take him long to decide what he should do now. He could not go to his employer and explain matters, for disclosures might follow. So once more he went to Volsk. Money he had in abundance, and why, therefore, not try his luck as a corn merchant? He knew the country well, he was acquainted with most of the cornfactors, and no one could deal better with the peasants than he could. On arrival at Volsk he made the church a handsome present, commending his enterprise to God and the saints. To omit to propitiate them was in his view certain ruin.

To the east of Nikolayev stands an obscure village not far from the territory of the Ural Cossaks. Like most villages in these parts where water is scarce, it was situated on the banks of a small river which towards the end of summer dried up completely, and the only available water supply was then from a lagoon formed by a small willow-overgrown weir thrown across a narrow depression. Owing to its distance from any large navigable river, or main road, or railway, the village suffered also from a dearth of timber and hence the majority of its inhabitants were compelled to be satisfied with mud huts; strange looking objects these mud huts are. Generally oblong in shape with two small irregular windows, sundry cracks in the walls and sufficient pasture on the flat roofs to afford a sheep half an hour's feed! But they are more wretched looking than is really the case. The village also contained a few large substantially built log cabins. As a rule the peasantry inhabiting these confines of Eastern Russia are well to do. There is plenty of land and it is fairly rich, hence those who are able to cultivate it live a life of comparative ease and plenty, leaving to their poorer brethren the burden of cultivation and bullock driving with their noisy shouts of "sopp, sopp, sabaah-ah-ah" (to the left, to the left, to the right)! In these parts, too, the majority of the peasants were formerly State serfs. There was no landed gentry. So little did these peasants know of the better to do classes that the legend has it that a lady passing through the village astonished the female portion of the community by her yellow kid gloves. The women wanted to know whether the yellow skin of the hands was because the lady did no work, as if so they would rather work than live at ease! In times of distress they had no one to whom they could turn for assistance and yet the taxes, payable half-yearly, and the officials' backshish had to be found. When money was wanted it had to be borrowed at usurious rates from strange peasant money lenders. But, before this, the

hoarded grain was first disposed of, or, rather the little that is left of it after bad storage and after the rats (which are a veritable plague of themselves) have grown fat on it. When the grain is gone, bundles of greasy bank notes are brought forth, and, when these fail, from under the brick stove are produced old fine silver coins belonging to past generations who have hidden them in times of robbery and general insecurity. All these failing, the money lenders made advances on the next year's crop and then, once in the hands of the usurers, the peasants are slaves for ever. In this part of Russia the usurers are not Jews. I did once meet a Jew here, but he was not a successful man. He told me the Russians were too smart for him!

At such a village, Maghilyevo, Ivan established himself and before long he began to reap his harvest. Twenty per cent. per month was a high rate of interest, even if he sometimes lost the principal. One day he met a fellow cornfactor who had built himself a fine house at Volsk. Ivan thought he was as good as this man so why should he not build himself a house. And he did. All the same he was as energetic at his business as ever—here, there, everywhere buying grain, selling it, storing it. Yet to his mind—now in full swing—he was not growing rich fast enough. He must grow grain as well as merchandise it. But he was surrounded by cultivators who mostly owned the land they cultivated and who neither cared to let it nor to sell it, and who in most cases probably could not sell it if they would. In the Novo-Uzensk district it was otherwise. There the crown lands were a sort of monopoly in the hands of a few enterprising peasants like himself, who, leasing enormous areas from the Crown, sublet them to the peasants at a considerable profit. He watched his opportunity, and, by the aid of backshish, he convinced the Imperial Commissioners of his fitness as a lessee. Like his fellow monopolists he drew his workers from amongst the peasants of the districts of Kazan, Novgorod, Simbirsk and the Upper Volga Valley, if so it can be called, and when the first crop of that far-famed "White Turkish" wheat covered his dessiatins (acres) his apology for a heart rejoiced at the prospect of fresh thousands of roubles filling his pockets.

As his business extended and his operations became more complicated he found it necessary to employ several bailiffs, but true to his own deeds he gave them little opportunity for plunder, and being always on the "qui vive" for a dishonest action on the part of his employes, he managed on the whole pretty well in keeping and increasing his own. Winter or summer he knew no rest. Here one day collecting debts. There the next to see that Andray is not surreptitiously selling some of his grain to a rival merchant, to come to him later on with a pitiful story about a fire. Now giving orders for the exploitation of the land, now ascertaining that Syergay is properly attending to the threshing of the corn, now speeding along the tracks usually called roads in a springless tarantass (carriage) like any other traveller. Throughout these excursions

sions and journeying his only companion for some time past had been a young man named Timofay Keller, but known as Timofay Pavlovitch, in other words, Timofay, the son of Paul, whom he had once picked up starving.

Timofay was the son of a small German landed proprietor at Khvalinsk, who by dint of frugal living and hard work had been enabled to send his two sons to the University at St. Petersburg. Keller, quite contrary to the usual custom, had married a Russian woman. The elder son, Vadim, had long since settled down, but Timofay was a neer-do-well. He had a quick understanding, was active and capable of a large amount of work—when he liked; unfortunately he little liked. At the University the company of other idlers kept him from his studies, and getting "suspect," he was suddenly ordered by the police to quit the city. He then successively filled the posts of clerk, schoolmaster, shop assistant, bailiff's assistant and bailiff, but in none of the situations did he remain long for his idleness was incurable, and so dismissal followed dismissal. His share of the patrimony had long since been frittered away. On applying to his brother for assistance, the latter replied he was a Socialist, or as it was then called a Cosmopolitan, that consequently all men were alike dear to him; therefore Timofay had no more claim on him than had anybody else and so he could not help him, and Timofay in return called Vadim all the bad names he could think of, which naturally did not help much! After almost starving for a while he was fortunate in meeting Ivan, who took him into his service. Ivan was actuated by two motives. He could get Timofay for a low wage, and he had often heard that a German was to be trusted. Germans used to bear a very good name for honesty and I remember a case where, to prove the rule, a German had defalcated and all the Russians were astonished. "But he was a German," they exclaimed doubting the charge. "If he had been a Russian, well, well!" and while they could guard against the little failings of their countrymen they were not prepared to guard against a class of people supposed to be honest. Ivan's Timofay was only half a German. However that may be, Timofay remained in Ivan's service. Ivan could hardly read and certainly could not write, and did not care to have too much of his business put to paper; hence Timofay had little to do. The travelling was rather agreeable to him than otherwise; he could smoke away time; he could join in the holiday fun, and there used to be far too much of it in the villages, and being naturally ready for pleasure he was always welcome. He had plenty to eat and his scanty wages supplied him with sufficient clothing and tobacco. What more could he want. He felt happy enough and thought it well to remain so.

It was to have been expected that Timofay, being suspect, would have attempted to propagate Nihilist doctrines amongst the peasantry. He had tried to do so once, but the peasants would listen to nothing against the Emperor, although they allowed him to abuse the Government as much as he liked. There is little doubt

as to the discontent of the peasants. Bad seasons, debts, heavy taxation, drink, too much leisure, and too many religious holidays, but above all their great ignorance, weigh heavily upon them. They thought if only their "Little Father," the Tsar, knew, all would be made well, and peasants have been known to tramp it to St. Petersburg to tell him. Arrived there they get driven away by the police and return crestfallen to their villages, but with unabated faith in the willingness of the Tsar to assist them. But this is a digression. Well to do as Ivan now was he still retained his plain peasant habits as most of such Russians do. While he would have in his stores preserves of the very best against the passing rare visits of the nobility or gentry or tax gatherers, he himself adhered very closely to the peasants' usual fare. He continued to wear the old red shirt hanging loosely over the wide cotton pants; he had the usual strap round his waist, but they were all of the best quality. Instead of a sheepskin fur coat he had wolfskin, but he wore good top boots instead of the bast shoes and coarse hempen puttees worn by his fellow peasants. His house was spacious and furnished with considerable luxury; yet he found no comfort in the soft arm-chairs. As to the downy bed, after having attempted to sleep there once he vowed he would never do so again, preferring to curl up under the staircase, or in summer to lie on the bare boards of the verandah. He therefore soon let his house to an impoverished noble, once his client, and he himself lived in the kitchen.

Thus years went by and he continued to prosper. But in spite of business he was not unmindful of the church. He reguiled its dome and the ikon of his patron saint never lacked for candles for its glorification. He had, of course, sent money home to pay the taxes and to pay a substitute to work his father's land. He had also helped his family, inclusive of parents and wife in their difficulties; beyond that he did not mention his wealth, although for some years past his fellow villages suspecting it, had been trying to get him back in order to fleece him a little. One day to their surprise they heard he had sent for his wife and child.

Ivan's native village, Bagdanovka, had not altered much since he had run away from it long ago. There were perhaps a few more houses, more land was under cultivation, and the forest seemed further off. But that was all. One bright hot Sunday afternoon, the women were decked out in their bright coloured frocks, and looked a pretty sight seated in the middle of the street, some munching nuts or sunflower seeds, others knitting, and others again nursing their babies. Four boys close by were deeply engaged in a game of cards—the cards so dirty and worn that it was difficult to make out which was which. Close to a granary there was a group of young men, with an old one, who ought to have known better, playing at pitch and toss. A lively party of youths of both sexes were laughingly passing up the street near the dram shop, where the fools of the village were lying about more or less drunk. On the oppo-

site side of the street a party of elders were discussing communal affairs, and while doing so were interrupted by an old man.

"Good day, brothers."

"Good day, Alexandre Vadimitch," they reply cheerfully, "what news hast thou this day?"

"Nothing," answered Alexandre, "but tell me why did ye let Grisha, Mikhail's son, leave the village? The rascal owes me a day's work."

"The worse for thee, then. Why dost thou not look after thy affairs? But don't trouble thyself, fatherkin. Mikhail's son will come back. Dost think Mikhail will let his son run away as thou didst thine?"

"My son! Well, he does not owe anybody anything. He has always paid his taxes, and pays for the labour I have to get to replace his. Besides, didn't he help the commune in the drought?"

"Yes, yes; we know he is rich, but why does he not come back?"

"Come back, why should he? He wants his wife to go to him."

At this the elders burst out laughing. "Wants his wife to go to him after all these years. Tell him to come back and fetch her himself, then. We shall not agree to any going on her part."

And argue as Alexandre would, nothing would move them. They knew that if Ivan were to return it meant fingering his money, and if his wife were to leave he would never come back. In the end they agreed they would send someone to fetch him.

Some weeks later one of the elders himself had an interview with Ivan, and much to the latter's annoyance saw how well he was doing.

"Ptoo, ptoo," ejaculated Ivan, as he made believe to spit on the floor when he was told he must go back with the delegate from his village, Nikolai Mitrofanovitch. "Oh, the sons of dogs. How disgusting of them. I have been away all these years, and now they pretend they want me. I will have nothing to do with them. Let them go to the devil," and he broke forth into every abusive epithet he could for the moment think of. He did not hate his fellow-villagers, but he knew resistance was useless and, if he declined to go and the police were put on his track, the backshish they were after would be more than trebled. So he calmed down after a bit, and in the end it was agreed he should send a few hundred roubles and his wife should be allowed to join him. His ransom having been settled, Nikolai now declined to be the bearer of it unless Ivan paid a debt he had incurred amounting to a few more roubles, and Ivan was obliged to hand over a further sum. Finally, to settle the matter, they both went to the dram shop and there, for the first time in his life, Ivan got drunk.

Soon afterwards Ivan settled down with his wife at Pilkovo, where at times he was to be found watching from the balcony of a two-storied house the arrival of the caravan loads of grain the peasants brought to market. Some of the peasants had been there before, others had not, but even those who knew the way showed they were in a strange place by the manner in which they stared about them.

"Good day, fatherkin," says Ivan, "for whom art thou looking?"

"They tell me," drawled out the peasant in reply, "that Nestor Vassilitch, the merchant, lives here. I have brought him my grain."

"Never mind Nestor Vassilitch, he is away. I will give thee a better price than he can."

"But I must bring him my grain. He lent me money on my crop."

"So, of course, he has got you, and you will get but a low price."

"Well, what wilt thou give?"

"Let me have a look," says Ivan, taking up a sample of very fair wheat. "Ptoo, ptoo, it's beastly stuff! It's not worth buying! It's thin. It's full of weeds. What wilt thou take for it?"

The peasant knows his wheat is good, and also knows that the other merchant will not give him a good price. He hopes he may do better with Ivan, and so hesitatingly says

"Ninety kopecks" (i.e. per pood of 36 lbs.).

"Thou fool, thou canst go thy ways."

"Well, sir, say thou how much?"

"Sixty."

"But, sir, please, sir, say seventy-five. I'm poor, I have to pay off Nestor Vassilitch. My God, it is true. Do please, sir, say seventy-five."

Finally seventy-five kopecks is agreed upon, and the peasant is sent to the granary to discharge his load, where the faulty weighing machine discovers that of the thirty poods he has weighed out at home there were now only twenty-eight. The haggling over the price was normal in the trade, and it was also normal that every bargain should be settled with a drink. Ivan was now frequently getting drunk.

The Khirghiz who came to Pilkovo were, however, tougher customers, but on the other hand they knew less about the value of money and the vagaries of a weighing machine. It was curious to see these half-nomads arrive, slouching alongside their little Russian carts, drawn by dromedaries or horses or bullocks, or occasionally a dromedary and bullock. They are a wild-looking lot, with long, drooping moustachios and fantastically shaped fur caps, mostly conical but also frequently with the cone hanging on one side like the Cap of Liberty. They traverse hundreds of versts (a



HAY HARVEST. A NOON-DAY REST. ON THE STEPPES, TIMASHEVO.



WOMEN RAKING IN HAY. MEN IN SUNDAY DRESS. TIMASHEVO.

verst equals two-thirds of a mile) before reaching their destination, as they come from the distant salt swamps or the boundaries of the territories of the Ural Cossacks. They are hemmed in on all sides and the extent of their lands reduced by the encroaching Russians, and as their herds diminish they are perforce obliged to take to farming. They bring their grain to Volsk; from there it is shipped up the Volga to the Ribinsk depot; from there it goes by rail to St. Petersburg to the Greek merchants, the monopolists of the trade, who ship it to Hull to feed the people of Yorkshire.

Ivan, now at the zenith of his prosperity, had probably accumulated one hundred thousand roubles (paper), and had it invested in grain, growing crops, barges, granaries and land. He knew little of any other world than his own, nor did his business allow him to think of anything else, and what money he could not invest in his business he let lie idle—some at the bank, but a very great part of it was stuffed away in his house, and a large quantity of the paper money he always carried about with him.

The continual strain of business and his restless activity led him more and more to indulge in drink, and with drink the great corn mer-

chant fell. Drink made him careless; drink allowed some considerable debtors to slip through his fingers, and drink paved the way for his bailiffs to rob him. His corn was frequently not properly threshed, and two successive droughts caused him to lose many thousand roubles which had been advanced in loans on the crops. Then there was a non-incendiary fire so common in those parts, which consumed a whole village, including his largest granary. With this his remaining energy seemed to vanish. Timofay, upon whom now devolved the larger share of the work, robbed him right and left, generally going half-shares with the overseers in the plunder, and thus Ivan, no longer able to hold his own, saw his large fortune melting away. It did not dismay him. It was fate! Finally, on his return one night from a big sale, with his pocket-book crammed with roubles, when both he and his driver had too much drink, the bridge over the snaky Iriz river was missed, and all his party were plunged into the water. With difficulty Timofay saved him from drowning, but when Ivan recovered, the bank notes had disappeared. So from bad he went to worse, and then Timofay began to lend him money, how obtained he asked in vain, and before long all he had left was a few roubles a month.

IV.—AN EPISODE DURING HAY HARVEST.

Although the sun had not yet appeared on the horizon, the village was all alive with preparations for the work of the coming day. Hay harvest had commenced, and those who had returned from the fields the previous night were anxiously busy to get back to work. As I rode out to the mowers some were already hard at it, gathering in what is really a gift of Providence. Groups of men and women were standing round a few temporary rude huts made of branches and covered with grass and straw, where many of the labourers had passed the night to be ready to start mowing at the very first dawn of day. All were barefooted. The men, in loose cotton pants and over-hanging blouses, had their hair curiously flattened down on either side of their faces by means of a string fillet, and while they were whetting their scythes the women, dressed often only in a single cotton gown, were tending the children and preparing the day's provisions. Time was short, and as soon as the sun had dried yesterday's mowings the women trooped forth to rake it together. Scattered about the huts were carts and harness, wooden bowls and other tools and implements, all in rough disorder, while hobbled horses were grazing close at hand. Before long the men had set to work, settling to it in a way peculiarly their own. One man started, and when he had made a few cuts, a second mower began at his right, keeping time to the first one's cutting. When the second had advanced a stride or two a third started to his right, and so on until ten to fifteen men had joined in and were all steadily mowing in time. Thus the mowers continued for hours, with the occasional interruptions caused by a blunted

scythe, or the desire for a drink of water, kept cool under the shuba (sheepskin coat), or by the whirr of startled grouse as they rose at the men's feet in fearful flight, leaving their bewildered little ones behind.

As the work progressed so did the sun, which rayed down upon the mowers a veritable optical heat. One by one the younger men looked wistfully round to see whether the elders thought it time to stop, but the labour did not cease—not until the leading grey beard, almost as lusty in his old age as in his youth, deemed the morning's mowing sufficient. Then the women were called from the rakes and came up singing, but want of time and voice spoiled the beauty of their melodious national songs. The millet porridge, with rarely a little flesh of fowl and a few spoonfuls of sunflower oil, which had long been simmering over the fire, was now transferred to large wooden bowls, and with brown bread placed upon tables which were formed in the ground by the removal of the soil in the form of a circular ditch. The men and women sat round the tables with their feet in the ditch. Every one took a chunk of dark bread in the left hand, and with a wooden spoon in the other fed themselves from the bowls in their midst. At first they were quiet enough, but as their appetites got satisfied conversation began, and when many were present a wit or two would always be found to enliven them with gay talk. All the same, conversation does not last long, and, the repast over, men and boys pulled out precious bits of old newspapers or soiled paper of any sort, twisted them into tapering tubes, and filled them with the dried

cabbage leaf they had purchased under the name of tobacco. After a whiff or two this primitive pipe was passed on to the neighbour, and so on all round. The heat was intense. The women retired to rest, the men dropped off one by one, the horses had long since sought the slender shelter afforded by the carts, and the savage wolf dogs gave over snarling. Soon all was hushed in sleep. Only the crows and the crickets broke the silence into which all had fallen, except the hawks, who never seemed to weary.

After two or three hours' rest the mowers and haymakers gradually straggled back to work, which went on till nearly dusk. At nightfall the carts returned home laden with the produce of the passing day to return with provisions for the morrow's labour. As I, too, rode homeward, one of the bailiffs came up and informed me that on the previous night hay had been stolen from some of the out-lying stacks. So we had to go in search of the thieves.

The moon was at her best at about 11 o'clock, when seven of us, well mounted on Bashkir horses, turned out to watch. The sky was clear and the air chilly. We passed several groups of peasants who preferred to do their mowing under the cool moonlight than to toil during the hot day. Further on we steered clear of a few encampments where our arrival was met by the low growl of the huge dogs. Then, cantering across some beautiful down and riding past unlimited fields of rapidly ripening rye and wheat, we slowed down upon five men in the distance, who appeared to be filling their carts from an unfinished haystack. Although there are neither hedges nor fences, every man knows his own boundaries, and as soon as we were certain that the stack was ours, we rode sharply down on to the thieves, and, almost before they were aware of our presence, we had unharnessed their horses, which two of our men immediately drove to the village to impound. We recognised the pilferers as old friends at this game, chaffed them, and proceeded on our journey, without taking any notice of their attempted excuses. On the morrow they will no doubt send their money to release their horses, and deem themselves lucky that we do not send them before the magistrate. Not far distant a man was caught mowing our grass. His horse was also taken, but we told him we would send him before the magistrate. This was not to his taste. He would rather be mulcted in a fine, because the magistrate lived a long way off, and, at this time of the year, time was precious, even in Russia. He begged and prayed us to fine him, and finally knelt abjectly at our feet, as in the old servile days of bondage. All in vain, for on a previous occasion, when an estate bailiff tried to secure him, he let out with his scythe, killing the bailiff's horse—for truly the scythe is a formidable instrument in the hands of a ruffian.

Later on we fell in with a troop of hobbled horses. We had to go slow now, taking a wide circuit, and we were much astonished to come across a large gipsy encampment well within

our boundaries. A terrible din was raised as we approached, and what with the screaming of the women and children, the barking of the dogs and shouts of the men giving and receiving orders as they hurried to and fro to gather and to hide their horses, we were for a time unable to make ourselves heard. A German bailiff at my elbow, addressing a savage old shock-headed greybeard, who appeared to be the chief, asked how many horses they had. But the old man made no answer, and a young gipsy, in broken Russian, told us the greybeard was deaf and dumb, and they had only "nine horses or so."

"Count the horses" was the order given to one of our men. But the man, like all the peasants, was afraid of the gipsies, and dared not trust himself among them, so two were told off to do the counting. Seeing we were determined to know how many horses were trespassing the youth added: "Oh, I did not understand. We have sixteen." But in the meantime our men had counted over thirty, and there were many more about.

We stormed at the deceit and threatened to impound the lot. Then the din began again. The vicious gipsy dogs snarled and made feint to attack our horses, and in driving them off one of our men unfortunately struck a gipsy with his whip. There was a yell, and the gipsy tried to pull the man off his horse, but desisted on interference by the greybeard. Then the children commenced to squeal again, and the women added their howls. The tramping of the snorting and frightened horses, as the gipsy boys darted in and out amongst them to try and disperse them and hinder our counting, increased the state of discord and confusion. While the whole camp was thus fully aroused, and everybody was as usual in such cases yelling for nothing, we were hemmed in by many men begging and praying us in almost unintelligible Russian not to impound their horses and they would move off with the first streak of daylight, but they did this with gestures which were anything but those of supplicants, and while they were swearing they were willing to do our bidding, their friends were endeavouring to make more confusion than ever.

All of a sudden the dumb old greybeard gripped me by the leg as though he were about to pull me off my horse, and as I raised my whip to drive him off, he fell on his knees, kissed my boot, and begged me in bad German—there was no mistake about it—not to impound their horses and he would order all the encampment away as soon as morning came. No sooner had the old man begun to speak than the uproar ceased. We quickly came to terms, and were glad enough to leave the encampment. The old man threw many blessings after us, but he was as good as his word in one sense, for the following morning, when we sent a large party of men to get the promised fine, he and his band had got so many miles away that we gave up pursuing them. The damage their horses did was very great.

V.—A POLISH EXILE.

Exiles are numerous in Russia, and are met with almost everywhere except in St. Petersburg and Moscow. Whether their punishment is proportionate to the offence committed is an open question; suffice it that their lot is an unhappy one, and one which calls forth the strongest sympathy from the outsider.

While travelling on one occasion, with a view to getting some idea of a part of the country beyond the Volga new to me, for a little book I had in hand, I arrived in the afternoon at Pauloffka, a village in all respects like any other. I was alone, and, as is generally the case with strangers in these parts, I found some difficulty in obtaining shelter for the night. My dress told the peasants at once that I was a foreigner; most of them thought I was a German from the "Colonies" lower down the Volga—a people whom I found afterwards to be very inhospitable. The women looked upon me suspiciously, and put me off by telling me they had either no food, no room, or that their husbands and sons were away. At last, after several unsuccessful attempts to get a lodging, I called at a log-house where they took me in, not, however, without cross-questioning me as to who I was, my occupation, whither I was bound, whence I came, &c., all of which questions having been answered to their satisfaction, I was allowed admission. One question was had I a certain little book (Knishka) in my possession? On my answering "No," they appeared evidently to doubt me. By the little book they meant any revolutionary or Nihilist pamphlet.

The house consisted of one large room, with the usual partitions, clean and comfortable, and at the moment occupied by this woman, her sister, and her aged mother-in-law; the latter was rocking a cradle suspended from one of the rafters, and all were knitting. I soon ingratiated myself with them by the great interest I took in the two dirty little urchins rolling about on the floor. The subject of our conversation changed from the children to the mothers, and they were complimented on their bonny looks and stoutness, a sign of beauty amongst them. Soon we were a merry party. However, when I turned the conversation, and inquired about the country and crops they could tell me nothing.

"We know nothing about that," said they.

"But you live here all your lives, you work in the fields at harvest, you see the crops, and you know where they sell the corn, don't you?"

"Ah, but we are women! we know nothing. Thou must ask the men."

"And where are the men?"

"In the fields a long way off."

I had no wish to walk five or six miles into the fields, and the horses wanted rest, and whilst thinking what to do the mother-kin in the corner suddenly looked up and said:

"Well, but the Pole, you idiots, tell the gentleman about the Pole."

"Yes, yes," laughed the women, "we idiots, we forgot him, he knows everything—everything."

At the offer of one of the women I followed her to the Pole's residence, and was conducted to an ordinary peasant's cabin at the end of the village. The woman called to someone within, and immediately a young man stepped out and bade me welcome. I entered a room exceptionally clean and somewhat cosy. Instead of the Oratory filled in with the tinselled icons common to all Russian dwellings, there was a small ivory crucifix in a corner of the room, and a rosary lay with some worn prayer-books on the table. Part of the room was also partitioned off by a curtain. The young man was still good looking, but did not appear able to withstand for long the rough life of a Russian village.

I explained the object of my visit, and gradually from one subject to another we came to speak to his life and how he had come to live in such an out of the way place. It was an old story in Russia.

Although a Pole, he came from the Volhnia, where from time immemorial his ancestors had owned fairly large estates. His father, when he was still a boy, had become mixed up with some plot, and in attempting to escape was shot by the soldiers in his own hall. From that time forth the family was "suspect" and under the surveillance of the police. Not a twelvemonth passed without the visits of officers of the "Third Division," and often the trembling household used to be aroused by nocturnal visits of the gendarmes who, surrounding the house, would examine it and its inmates, and, failing to find anything that compromised them, would retire, the commanding officer departing with the superfluous warning that they should be careful of their actions.

Stanislaus had taken a lesson from his father's fate, and his hatred towards the Russians was only restrained by the thought of the probable fate which awaited his mother and sister should he fall in the struggle. Though far from disbelieving in the hopelessness of the Polish cause, he remained quietly at home looking after the estates, and yet, in spite of his non-interference in political questions, the Government were intensely suspicious of him. They could not believe that a man whose father had lost his life in attempting their overthrow would ever forgive them, and thus it happened one day, when Nihilism in embryo was giving them more than usual trouble, that Stanislaus received a peremptory order from the Government to sell one-half of his estate, which order, if not carried out within a fortnight, would entail the confiscation of the whole property. The times were bad, the price of land had fallen considerably, for already several Polish families were quietly transferring their wealth abroad, and there was besides much confiscated property

to be disposed of. The first week passed and no sale had been effected. Ten days elapsed, and still no buyer could be found. Twelve days, and the family were becoming alarmed.

On the evening of the thirteenth a Jew shambled up the steps, and said he had come to buy the half-estate. The Jew offered a few thousand roubles for property which, at a low valuation, was worth over a hundred and fifty thousand! The man was, of course, simply a tool in the hands of the police and, as he could not buy the land in his own name, he was proposing to buy it in the name of a peasant long since dead! Had the unhappy Jew not consented to do this trick it would no doubt have fared badly with him. The morrow came, with it the Jew and notary, and half of Paul's fine estate passed by deed to a dead peasant—a fine piece of booty for the police. Then came the misguided, hopeless revolt. Stanislaus rose to join his countrymen, was seized, imprisoned, and after long confinement was sent an exile to Perm. The miserable pittance allowed him by the Government was insufficient to maintain life, but he added to it an uncertain income obtained by tuition and letter writing. His reservedness alienated any little sympathy he might have met with otherwise. The Russians naturally dislike the proud and more intelligent Poles, and, generally speaking, have more

than enough sorrow with their own exiles and "suspects." On obtaining his comparative freedom he was, of course, penniless. He wandered to the south, and finally finding a vacancy he accepted the secretaryship to the Comune of the large village where I met him. His duties, together with an occasional letter he had to write for the peasants, afforded him just sufficient means to live on.

Here was a man brought up in luxury, with means, and with an education and intelligence which, but for persecution, would have been invaluable to his country. Like most educated Russians and Poles, Stanislaus was a good linguist, he spoke English and French fluently, besides understanding German and Italian, and the Slav dialects of his district; he was, moreover, a good naturalist and agriculturist, and at heart a very moderate Liberal. He felt much the want of literature and intellectual employment in general. Occasionally the Russian priest lent him a stray newspaper or the novel of a passing stranger, but this was on rare occasions, and beyond the meagre rumours brought him by the peasants, he knew little of the doings of the outer world. His spirit had long been broken; all he wished for was peace and quiet; he had only one hope now, and that was for the success of the Polish cause.

VI.—CONCLUSION.

In the above sketches, written immediately after my departure from Russia at the end of 1877, I have endeavoured to portray some of the characters I met with in the trans-Volgian country—the middle and south-east of the Province of Samara. This enormous district had then not been settled much over 150 years, and still bore traces of Tatar dominion, which term includes the Bashkirs, Kirghiz, and, not the least, the mixed people known as the Ural Cossaks, and a wild, pugnacious, genial lot they are! This comparatively recent settlement, as well as Stenka Razin's revolt, may account for some of the lawlessness in such an extreme corner of European Russia, which was, perhaps, not to be found on this side of the Volga. Nor was it to be found amongst the German colonists, who resolutely declined to have anything to do with the Russians, whose hospitality they were enjoying. I was reminded later on of this characteristic of the German colonists in Russia by the German peasant colonists near Beenleigh and the Nerang River in South Queensland amongst whom I met with scant hospitality.

Since my time the peasant communal land holdings have been broken up, and the peasants have become individual landowners. This change, we are told, and may well believe, is having a distinctly beneficial effect on the welfare of the peasants who, it must be remembered, number about 90 per cent. of the whole population of Russia. Since the war began the

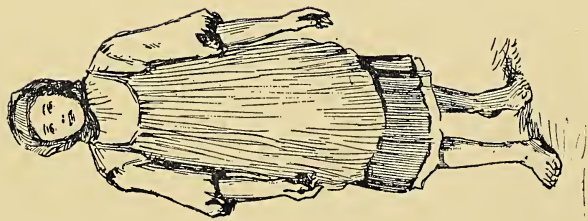
total prohibition of the manufacture and consumption of alcohol must also have tended greatly towards progress, for drink was a real curse in the country.

Elsewhere I have described the economics of the agriculture and peasantry of the large province in which I lived, and it may not be out of place to repeat some of the words then said about the peasant as I knew him so many years ago: "The peasant carries the seed of improvement with him: he is exceedingly inquisitive, is always craving for information about foreign countries, and an explanation of some new machine affords him immense satisfaction. When travelling I have occasionally been surrounded on an evening by a crowd of peasants, who paid the most profound attention to my descriptions, or, indeed, to anything that to them was new, and who showed their interest by asking for more and more detail." Most, if not all, Englishmen who have been in close contact with the muzhik, as the peasant is called, get to like him, for at heart he is a good fellow, ever ready to assist, and, if his word cannot always be relied on, he is so simple that he is easily found out!

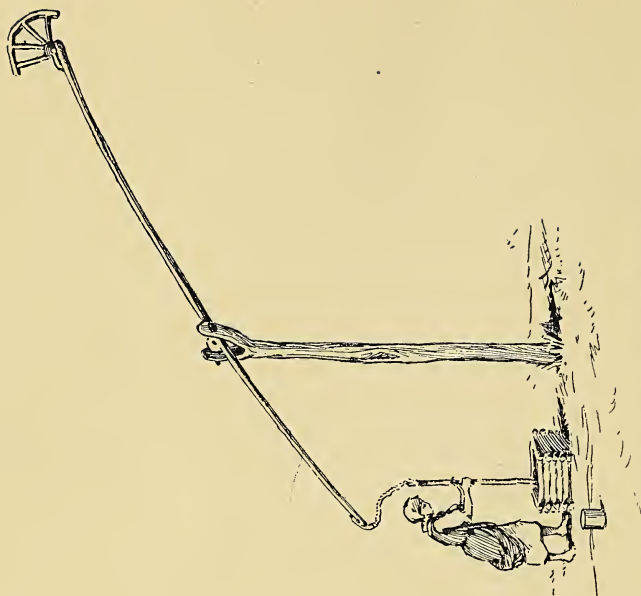
In my time the government was bad, and a reasonable explanation of the bad government Russia has suffered under for the past 200 years is afforded in a recently published book by G. de Wesselitsky, entitled "Russia and Democracy: the German Canker in Russia." He tells us that



HAY HARVEST AT TIMASHEVO. MOWERS AT WORK.



THE VILLAGE BELLE, TIMASHEVO.



DRAWING WATER, TIMASHEVO.

the great political unrest and aggressive foreign policy of Russia has been due to the machinations of the dominant German families in Petrograd who have fostered this unrest and policy in order to frighten the monarchy into the belief that, unless it fosters repression and aggression, it is likely to totter. He even accuses the Germans of bluff and bullying, of which we have seen a good deal of late. Now that this German incubus has been removed we may hope for a better government, which will assist Russia to

advance as Russians according to their own ideals, in other words let the country work out its own salvation.

The only publication descriptive of the part of Russia known to me, the province of Samara, was written by the author of "Epic Songs of Russia," Miss Isabel Hapgood, entitled "Russian Rambles," published by Longman's in 1895. It is a delightful book and well worth perusal.

Elsewhere.

I.—AT THE FOOT OF THE JURA.

It was in Russia of all places that I first obtained any definite idea of the beauties of the city of Geneva and its surroundings. Some young Russian sparks, taking advantage of my ignorance of the language, thought to have a lark with me, when a Madame Rentsch, a grey-haired Swiss lady, born in Geneva, spoilt their little game. Although Geneva is a Calvinistic city, Madame Rentsch was a Catholic, and during her last visit to her home she had obtained two candles blessed by the priest, which it was her fervent desire should be placed at the head of her bed when she died. It was quite pathetic to hear her describe to her friends and acquaintances where these candles would be found, in the hope that, when the time came, no mistake should be made. She was a dear good lady, with plenty of wit, and later we read a good deal of French together, when she used to tell me much about her native city and its history. Adjoining the Canton of Geneva, but in French territory, is the Pays de Gex, the country of that great cynic Voltaire, a quondam friend of a greater cynic, Frederick the Great Robber. In this part of the world also was immured Toussaint L'Ouverture, the negro patriot of Hayti, a victim of Buonaparte's broken faith. With the Pays de Gex begin the Jura mountains, which serve as a delightful introduction to the Majestic Alps.

Now that the railways penetrate the most remote portions of Switzerland, the tourist loses, by the rapid entry into the heart of the mountains, some of the grandest views which delighted earlier travellers. Who, nowadays, thinks of entering the mountain world by the old Napoleonic pass in the Jura, known by the name of La Faucile, and yet from the top of this pass is to be obtained the only complete view of the sublime Mont Blanc range in its entirety! On the other hand, the country formerly threaded by the traveller in arriving at this height is rich in scenery of another sort. He used to traverse roads which are walled in by steep precipices, and he went through miles of dense wild pine forests, while below him lay, and still lies, the beautiful, peaceful Mijoux

valley, which in the Middle Ages was an unhabited wilderness. Then, leaving the pass behind, he entered a thickly peopled level country, with a flora closely resembling that of the South of England, and tortuous lanes, with high edges and with clumps of oak reminding him of dear old Sussex. In this part of the Jura I spent many months with my brother Alfred.

If this country lying at the foot of the Jura is rich in scenery, for Mont Blanc is visible from every corner, it is also rich in historical lore. Peasants still dig up Roman broadswords and bucklers, and, when you come to know them, they will tell you all about the old secret underground passage which connected Divonne Castle with Nyon, but which in reality was the Roman Aqueduct from the springs of the Divonne (or Versoix) to Novidunum. In the times of the Reformation the old Catholic inhabitants were mercilessly treated by the ruthless Bernese who, as allies of the City of Geneva, laid waste the northern lands of the House of Savoy. As the fortune of war favoured now one party, now the other, so were the wretched people compelled to change their faith until finally the Protestant conquerors drove them out of the country and hemmed them in at Fort l'Ecluse. There they immortalised their faith by the word "Credo," which they hewed inches deep into the side of the rocky precipice, and there were they massacred by the protesting invaders. When the Bernese retired, refugees from the forests and marshes returned and partly rebuilt their old houses, but the old priory on Mont Mousset was destined never to rise from its ashes, and its stones now form an integral portion of many a peasant's house.

Destructive as the retired conquerors had been, they had nevertheless allowed some houses to stand, and this not on account of any spark of humanity they may possibly have possessed, but because the buildings were too well built and the time and energy required to be spent in their demolition was probably considered excessive. At one village, Arbère, there is an old house, not by any means a solitary example, which was built at the commencement of the

16th century; it was repaired in 1720, and has not required any more repair since then. The yard wall partly takes in one of those huge granite boulders, so common in this country, which geologists inform us were brought over from Mont Blanc in glacial times whenever that was. The tenants of this old building are well-to-do peasants, who possess pedigrees dating back to 1350—real aristocrats of the soil—and whose upper storied rooms are full of chests of receipts, letters, title deeds, law suit reports and marriage settlements. One is astonished at the good handwriting of the documents, and is reminded of the depth of the simple faith of these people who endorse all contracts of marriage with the words: "Nous vous supplions Seigneur" ("We pray Thee, O Lord"). Arbere is an interesting, somewhat dirty, and picturesque village. But it takes time to know the inhabitants. Very hospitable, polite, and ever ready for a little talk, they were reticent concerning their own affairs. Strangers were evidently not to be trusted. What did the inhabitants know of these parvenu outsiders; they might be spies or Republicans! Not that these peasants would ever have attempted to upset the present form of government; all they asked was to be let alone, but with them a Republican and a thief were synonymous terms—I am speaking of years ago. To a certain extent they were right. The neighbouring factories, with their Parisien workmen of loose morals afforded them an example to be avoided, and the new regime in the Commune had already run them into debt—a dishonourable state of affairs which had never been known to have happened before.

There were only a few Republicans at Arbere, but at the fete of the Republic, one July, when I was there, all the inhabitants equally displayed their loyalty in the convenient and unquestioned form of bunting. In one household the form of government was evidently divided, for the wife rudely tore off the red end of the Tricolour. Straightway a Mrs. Republican went to the Mairie and proclaimed an insult to the national flag. A gendarme appeared on the scene, examined the mutilated flag, and tactfully decided there had been no insult, for there still remained a thin strip of the red bunting, and the red stripes had not been removed from the staff.

Some quaint characters were to be met with here. There was Fatty, as we christened an old lady, the popular owner of the boutique, who told us on the quiet that to do well in a peasant village, "One must be beloved. One must not be tempted by gain in any transaction which is not perfectly straightforward. The peasants are very particular, they insist on good quality, and they do not object to pay proportionately."

"You know," she said, "Louis with the imbecile wife. Well, he tells me he likes his wife to deal with me, because I do not take advantage of her silliness."

"Then does the opposition shop rob her?"

"I hear them talk," she said, shrugging her fat shoulders. "I don't know anything, but they nearly all come to me now."

"If you are so much liked, how is it that no gallant ever came to marry you?"

"Ah, there it is," she replied, as her fat face puckered up with smiles. "You have not heard yet that there is a fairy stone in this village, and if a girl once puts her foot on it she can never marry. No one knows where this stone is—I must have put my foot on it. I think it has disappeared now, for we have had one marriage lately and another is coming on, but my time is long past." But this was said gaily, without a sigh.

"Yes, yes, the stone has gone, for Jeanne is going to be married next month. Her brother is vexed, for she is a strapping young woman who can do as much work as any labourer, and does it cheerfully too. They are a good family, bien gentil; they never gossip, but attend to their work."

At this moment a noisy light waggon passed, drawn by a single bullock and driven by as doubled up a dirty old tattered vagabond as one could desire not to see.

"Who is that dirty fellow? We see him often enough. He must be very poor?"

"Not at all, not at all. He is rich enough. His father left him forty thousand francs and he has any number of acres—many, many more than he can cultivate himself, and yet he will not employ anyone; he lives like a pig, is annually robbed of a few hundred francs, pays nobody without a summons, and I am one of his creditors. He is going to the mill now. I suppose the miller will grind his corn for him, although he will not get paid until the old pig dies."

"What a pretty mill it is," we remarked.

"Yes, and it pays, too, and has got a history. You have heard, no doubt, of the famous De Bluet, the shepherd of the Duke of Savoy, who became court buffoon and then wrote a history of his gallantries? Well, he was born in that mill. Only the other day some gentlemen came over here to try and find a copy of his book, for they say it is rare and worth a lot of francs now."

And so the old girl rattled on, but it was hard to say which rattled on the fastest, her knitting needles or her tongue. But she was a good old soul, never had a bad word for her neighbours, tried to make the best of everything, was greatly respected and went every day to confession.

My brother Alfred and I walked up to the mill and then followed the brook down to a water-driven threshing machine. It was situated in a pretty little lane, and we sat down on an old bench just above a miniature waterfall with trout in the lower pools. Presently work ceased and the owner, one of three bachelor brothers, approached and squatted beside us. He was a

grand old fellow, well to do, frank and straightforward. His working days were past; he only superintended then. We had known him some time, and were considered old friends, and discussed agricultural prospects.

"Your mill is not at work!"

"No, there is a repair or two wanting. The mechanics are at it now, but I miss your old compatriot for this work; these boys are nothing to what he was."

Thirty years ago previous to this conversation English agricultural engineers still had the monopoly in this neighbourhood and on the Continent generally, but they have long since been ousted by the natives. We did not know there had ever been any English mechanic in this neighbourhood, and as it interested us to know something about him, we inquired for further particulars.

"Strange you should never have heard of him. He only died last year. I can remember the day he arrived; it was in 1832. I was only a boy myself, and he was about 18 or 19 years of age, if as much. I saw a good deal of him, for, of course, our language is not the same as yours, and I used to take him over the country. Why, he built our threshing machine, he improved the old mill, he put up the cider-presses; there was nothing the lad could not do. A smart upright man he always was. At one time he had as many as 27 hands under his orders and the work went like lightning. He was never at a loss. Ah, he was a fine fellow.

"One day when he was working for me, I got a letter from your Ambassador (sic) at Geneva asking did I know a young man of the name of James Walker. Well, this was James Walker. His friends in England wished him to return, but he would not. I don't know why. Prob-

ably a faithless girl. Whatever the cause he remained with us.

"He had been working in the country here for about ten years, I think; he had got a small shop and was worth about sixty thousand francs, more or less. It was in 1840 or 1841, I don't remember; his nephew came out and joined him. He evidently liked the new arrival, and made him his confidential man. Things had been going on in this way for six months or so, I don't remember exactly, you know I am old and apt to forget, but going into town with wood or cheese or something of that sort, I called to see my friend. He was out. And the nephew? He had robbed his uncle and run away!

"A man does not easily get over two blows like that, and Walker now changed his manner of life. He was too good a man to go to the devil, but he spent all he earned. His money he now always carried in the palm of his hand, and when he had finished his job, for he never neglected his work, he collected his fellow mechanics and drank up all his gains—but he always kept sober. When his clothes became shabby, he used to go into town and come out with a new suit under his arm; then, hiding behind a hedge, he would change them, leaving the old clothes on the ground. Once, when he had done so near the Versoix, some peasants thought he was drowned and grieved for him, for he was much liked. Some old peasants who had no children, seeing he could not put anything by for a rainy day, left him annuities; one left him a hundred and eighty francs a year, another a hundred, and so on; but Walker continued to lead the same life until his death. Ah, he was a brave homme. He was like one of us. We thou'd each other."

And the old man trudged back to look after his mechanics.

II.—A TRAGEDY.

Some sixty-five or seventy years ago John Dawes was about to celebrate his twenty-first birthday, and on that day his wife eloped! He was exceptionally well off and had also been exceptionally unhappy, having every cause to be so. He had an elder brother, Alfred—rich like himself, but a bachelor and one of the kindest of men. I knew this brother in after years, and he gave me then one of the first books I remember possessing, a book which, with its beautiful old-fashioned wood engravings, I still treasure. These two brothers were greatly attached to each other, partly because of their kindly disposition, but also, no doubt, because they had no other relations, as well as on account of the great calamity which had overtaken the younger one.

When somewhat over nineteen years of age, John had fallen in love with and married a pretty girl much beneath him in intelligence and education. The dream did not last long. She took to drink and, finding her position in the

house irksome, preferred the tap room company of a neighbouring brewers entire, where she quickly became the laughing stock of the flunkies who frequented it. At last, as said, she ran away on her husband's twenty-first birthday.

After this she reappeared at intervals demanding money, but, as time went on, the intervals increased in duration, and when Dawes arrived at the age of thirty she had not shown herself for several years. Naturally he could only hope she was dead, especially as he had tried to follow her movements, and all inquiries as to her whereabouts had turned out fruitless. Finally, believing she must have died of drink, he married again—this time a very charming and handsome lady—and he was duly blessed with a handsome boy. In few homes was there greater happiness, and Dawes, still a young man, hoped he was now to have a long, happy life before him.

Suddenly the first wife put in an appearance, a terrible wreck this time, and as before demanded money. It was with the greatest difficulty she was induced to go away, but with the cunning which distinguishes such outcasts, she lingered long enough in the neighbourhood to find out that her husband had married again. In a fit of drunken jealousy she banged at the front door, yelling out for every one to hear that she would reveal the illegality of the second marriage. The mental strain to which Daves was subjected, and the terrible shock he had sustained on this woman's return, was too much for him. He took refuge in a bath, and there, cutting an artery, obtained the desired relief from his troubles.

At first it was thought that unfortunate business transactions had led him to do away with himself. It was not so. But fate had dogged him to the last, for on the night of his death the woman had been taken to the police station and was found dead in the cells next morning.

The shock of the deed and of the dreadful discovery which quickly followed unnerved his wife, and it was at one time thought she would become completely demented. After a while she recovered, and about nine years after her husband's death she married Mr. Alphonse

Mercer, a man of artistic temperament. After giving birth to three beautiful girls, Mrs. Mercer went mad. She felt the trouble coming on, and, with the help of her husband, chose the private asylum on Lake Lemane in which she was to be incarcerated. During her detention the boy and his stepfather became the greatest friends, and the boy became a schoolmate of my brother Alfred. Those who knew them were therefore, all the more shocked to learn what followed shortly after Mrs. Mercer's recovery.

One day the husband met a woman with whom he became enamoured, and his wife, being an obstacle to his desires, on the pretence of taking her for a drive, he got her locked up in an asylum again. He returned home and installed Mrs. C. in the wife's place, and she, to the astonishment of all, but really to serve her own vile ends, behaved well towards the youth and the other children. Mrs. Mercer did not stay long in the mad house; she managed to escape, got a separation from her husband, and in a court of law re-obtained possession for herself and son of all the monies her husband had spent during her unjust detention. The poor mother now hoped to settle down quietly, but one day her boy eloped with Mrs. C. and married her! Thus the heir to a few thousands a year fell as his father, unbeknown to him, had fallen years before.

III.—DEMARARA.

We had changed on to the Inter-Colonial boat at St. Thomas's (this was in 1875), and then steamed down to Georgetown, Demerara, on our way stopping at both English and French islands, getting what glimpses we could of their varied beauty. At St. Lucia, where we were to coal, something was found wrong with the engines, necessitating a whole day's delay, much to our delight. We climbed one of the hills overlooking the beautiful little land-locked harbour and, while busily trespassing on some overgrown gardens, stopped at the lodge of a large house for a drink of water. A tidy old negress, answering our summons, promised to bring the drink in a minute, and returned accompanied by a lady who asked us to stay lunch, and a very delightful family party we found there.

It was on returning from this island to Barbadoes some months later that a curious incident occurred. The night had been boisterous with a rough choppy sea, leaving us neither peace nor sleep. As we entered the roadstead of Georgetown, and just as I was hoping to get a little rest, a man entered my cabin and very quietly touched me on the shoulder, saying "Don't make a noise, but get up quickly, the ship is going down!" He said the same to my stable companion in the bunk above me and hurried out of the cabin, evidently to rouse others. The rough night and the slight list of the vessel appeared to confirm the man's tale, and, as we rushed into the saloon just as we were, we met other passengers in an equal state of deshabille making for

the gangway. I remember passing a steward standing flat against a partition staring mildly at us, and at the moment I did not understand why he did not try to save himself as we were doing. But we had hardly got on to the steps when suddenly the chief steward appeared on the top, calling out loudly to us to go back, as there was no danger! And there wasn't any. Only it was no easy matter to stop a crowd of weary, terrified passengers. The explanation followed quickly. As we turned and began to observe the comical appearance of some of us, we saw also the man who had roused us. He was in a straight jacket and was being pushed along by two stewards, gesticulating wildly but almost noiselessly. The unfortunate man was out of his mind!

After the islands the flats of Demerara did not at first sight seem very inviting—one sees the palms to the left of the town emerging from the sea, as it were behind the sea wall, where the railway runs, and where, when you had not time to get to a station, you sat on the rails, chewing sugar cane, and waved your kerchief for the train to stop and pick you up, which it did.

Generally speaking, the population is much mixed owing to the inter-marriage of almost every class and nationality represented, and I thought I had never seen such a variety. Here I saw a Jew married to an almost pure negress, and a Chinaman happily married to an Irish

woman! Perhaps the happiest couple as regards mixed marriage I met were a Mr. and Mrs. Geo. Forshaw. He was an almost pure-bred Bantu, his sallow complexion alone betokening the very slightest touch of European blood. His wife was a Buck—a pure-bred Arawak Indian brought up by the missionaries. He had all the courtesy of a born gentleman, was of a genial and happy disposition, a clever lawyer, and but for his colour he would have been Solicitor-General of the Colony. He had a large clientele among the East Indian, negro and Portuguese population, and his great difficulty was to keep them from going to law. His wife was a graceful little woman with instincts wholly those of a lady.

The Portuguese were there in great numbers. They were keen traders; they purchased their goods from the importers in Georgetown and retailed them from their shops in the plantation villages along the coast. They nearly all came from Madeira, and their great aim was to go back wealthy. How the wealth was obtained did not much matter. Anyway they were honest when they had to be! Stolen goods were not infrequently found in their possession, and I remember Chief Inspector Cox once complaining of the trouble they gave him, and telling me how an old Dutchman from Surinam determined to be even with a couple of these fellows from whom he had suffered in this way. During some repairs at his store, the Dutchman sent one of his niggers to them with a case of good square gin, and instructed him to sell it to them as stolen property. The men paid somewhat less than half-price for the case, and told the nigger they were prepared to buy plenty more if he would bring them more. In the course of the same week the nigger appeared with six cases, which they eagerly purchased, and when late that night the cases were opened these birds began to sing, but it was a plaintive chorus, for the cases were full of straw and stones!

A common dodge of these Portuguese was for them to evade their creditors by taking passage in a coasting vessel or in the more regular vessels which traded direct between the Colony and Madeira. To do this they had to be honest at first to get credit; every time they came into town they paid for goods previously had, whereby they increased their credit and so got more money in hand. When they saw this arrangement could not last any longer they didn't say good-bye, only they went. So frequently did such abscondings occur that at last a Government Ordinance was promulgated making it penal for any departing vessel to take with her any passengers without the Chief Constable's certificate. This ordinance naturally embraced everybody, although it was directed against the Portuguese. One day there arrived by the monthly inter-Colonial boat a certain Professor Stone—"an Electro Biologist," he called himself—a man who hypnotised people, and, knowing well how to puff himself, did a fairly good business. He put up at Beckwiths' Hotel, the hotel of the town, had good dinners, and his charming wife

patronised the shopkeepers, and both made an excellent impression. He advertised his arrangements as for one week in Georgetown, one week in Berbice, and a return week in Georgetown. Seats were booked in advance. All was delightful. He was allowed to go to Berbice, having ordered certain goods to be ready on his return, and, a couple of days before the date fixed for the return, he wrote a pleasant letter to the hotel proprietor saying how nice the Berbice people had been, and would he have the rooms ready for him, &c., &c. Then he sailed gaily away, and those who wanted him most found themselves the least likely to get him.

Although I was unfortunate in the treatment I met with by the individual who induced me to go out, I enjoyed my short stay in Georgetown considerably, for the Colonists are, throughout the West Indies, hospitality itself. Amongst those people who were most kind to me were Mr. and Mrs. Arnold and their son, Dr. Arnold, of Port o' Spain, a Mr. Jones, of, I think, Good Hope Plantation, and Mr. Luke Hill, of, I think, the Colonial Engineering Department. The man I went out to repudiated his agreement with me as soon as I got there. But if he treated me badly he behaved worse to others, and I should add he was neither an Englishman nor a Scotchman, the two peoples who largely make up the better class of society in Georgetown. He had employed an Indian master carpenter—an East Indian coolie as he was called—to put a paling round his house. The work was nicely carried out, but on inspection this rogue found everything wrong, and after much unwarranted abuse told the unhappy coolie he would not pay for such bad work! The foolish joiner, whose hot blood was not used to such treatment, instead of suing him in the court, began to write him letters threatening arson and murder, whereupon he was promptly arrested and convicted. His bill still remains unpaid.

While I was there a rather funny episode took place at one of the large warehouses (it was either Samuel Barber & Co.'s or Sandbach, Parker & Co.'s) which fronted the river below Sprotons Dock. For a considerable time thefts had been taking place, but Chief Inspector Cox and his detectives making no discoveries, the amateurs took the matter up. One of the clerks, keeping his own counsel, hid behind some hogsheds of sugar; another, who also took no one into his confidence, hid under the office desk. About 10 p.m. there was a big uproar, and the police, who were on the alert outside, rushing in, found the two amateurs had caught each other!

Demerara is not a place where people can find amusement whenever they please, and the long business hours, from half-past six in the morning to five in the afternoon, leave little room for recreation. It is perhaps harder for the lower than the upper classes, for the latter can at any time fall back upon pastimes obtainable in their own grounds, while the negroes have no such gardens, nor have they any general place of resort. Occasionally on holidays a steamer

takes a trip up the Essequibo, but this is generally an expensive affair, and quite beyond the average nigger's means. Being of a pleasure-loving and sociable disposition, the blacks are in the habit of meeting at "dignities"—a "dignity" being a species of ball held on the premises of a rum shop, where dancing and drinking is carried on at leisure.

The ordinary dignity is not always good enough for "Sammy"; he occasionally requires something better. So, lately, i.e., in 1875, a few blacks, representing the elite of the negro population, formed themselves into a society, which they called the Demerara United Amusement Club. The name is most appropriate, for probably no club has received a name expressing more clearly the objects for the carrying out of which it was constituted. Its organisation was similar to that of any other club, and it dealt very summarily with those who happened to fall into arrears with their subscriptions. Characterised by that love of grandiloquent names common to all negroes, the club called its chairman His Excellency the Governor, and the master of ceremonies the Commanding Officer.

A short time ago His Excellency Governor Seeley, i.e., His Excellency of the D.U.A. Club, gave a fancy ball, which went off so well that the members, elated at the success of their first pas, unanimously decided to hold a ball on a more magnificent scale. In consequence, for six weeks previous the fair darkies were in a state of excitement bordering on insanity. In their own estimation white ladies are only women, and black women are ladies; nevertheless, for an occasion like this, they must look like real buckra (white) ladies. There had been a buying of gay ribbons and muslins, and gaudy boots, and chignons without end, with the result that housewives had to attend to their household duties themselves. The girls consulted with each other as to whether a green dress with scarlet sash and orange trimmings would please the gallants, or whether a sky-blue skirt, green bodice and purple shoes would be more taking.

At last the long wished for night arrived, and a large and inquisitive mob thronged the space in front of Gonzalves Hall. As every black belle descended from her cart she was wildly cheered, and remarks more to the point than polite were freely passed: but the black beauties were not easily put out, and many a dark wit was sorry he had spoken when he found the laugh turned against him. The hall itself, a sort of large lumber-room, was fairly decorated. Giant palm leaves were arranged round the walls, creepers and bushes were wound round the posts and rafters, the doorways and windows were ornamented with flags, while dim Chinese lamps served somewhat to brighten it up. At the further end was a platform with three thrones under a gaudy canopy decorated with discordant colours. These thrones were intended for three queens, representing in the form of black females her Majesty Queen Victoria, an African, and an

Indian queen respectively. The steps leading up to the platform were covered with white linen sprinkled with spangles, and an extra light had been arranged overhead, so that the faces of the occupants might be made more visible to their loyal subjects.

Gradually the black ladies and gentlemen began to arrive. The dresses had a variety, grotesqueness, and gaudiness quite beyond description. The favourite costume of the males was that of a naval officer, of which we had many examples; there were two admirals, with epaulettes and swallow-tails complete, glittering with gold (paper) stripes and buttons. One little man wore an exceptional uniform, the pattern of which was apparently taken from that of the Corps Diplomatique, but he looked very much like a chimney sweep on May day. One coloured gentleman called himself the Earl of Warwick, but what his claim to that title was we could not ascertain. He was dressed like the fire-eater we are so familiar with at the sea-side at home. Another black, who claimed to be an Indian chief, appeared in a red frocks and tights, bead bracelets and bangles, and a crown adorned with peacocks' feathers; he bounced into the room with a flourish of his bow and arrows, then strutted about awhile with a supremely ridiculous air, and later on did not even unbend when dancing. Some of the men, more especially those with good figures (and these negroes have a good physique), looked well dished up as admirals and generals, but, generally speaking, their actual appearance was very comical.

The ladies were as gaudily dressed as the men, and one and all were most décolletées. One young belle in a Highland costume roused the ire of a too whisky-loving Scotchman, who evidently did not relish the idea of a Highland lassie with a black face. Night and Day were respectively represented by a black cotton dress and train, with a silver-paper moon and stars, and a blue dress with large gold-paper sun. One negress looked divine in a red velvet riding suit, an old Paris hat, and a puggaree.

The aides-de-camp were pacing the hall, gravely and ceremoniously saluting one another every time they passed, when a sudden flourish of trumpets announced the arrival of her Majesty the black Queen Victoria. The bustle which ensued did not last long, and in the meanwhile her Majesty was detained waiting on the landing outside. However, ample amends were made on her entry by the band, which struck up God Save the Queen, amidst the vociferous cheers of all present. On reaching her throne the Earl of Warwick read a short speech, in which he thanked the members of the club for past support, and eulogised the conduct of some in a superlative degree, and went on to say that, being honoured by such grand people, he had no doubt the ball would go off with eclat. He wound up by sending round the plate for a collection. Everyone having contributed his mite, the loyal subjects were presented to her Majesty, and the dancing began.

The hall was crowded with spectators, and did not admit of much accommodation for the dancers, but the latter nevertheless managed tolerably well. Negroes have a strange ear for music, and their dancing is a comical mixture of steps. The quadrille was the funniest dance of all. Try as they would, the white dancers who joined in found it perfectly impossible to keep it going. The blacks kept to the time right enough, but all the figures turned to ladies' chain, which quite perplexed us. The negro dancers go through all their movements with a decidedly serious air, seldom allowing even so much as a smile to cross their faces; they pirouette a good deal, and they contort their faces in an inconceivable yet quiet and dignified manner, and when they meet their partners they unceremoniously turn their backs on them! The old Queen, who went through one dance maintained her dignity throughout, and gave the bearers of her star-spangled train no little trouble. Continually making wrong turns, she naturally drew these poor boys after her, and at times so entangled them that they had to drop her train altogether. All this caused shrieks of laughter, but the old lady did

not smile once. And so the dancing went on. At midnight they were still working away with a will, some of the dancers were getting shaky, and here and there strong language and muttered oaths were becoming audible. Like all these meetings, this one was beginning to suffer from too much rum, and the Europeans considered it wise to withdraw. Before leaving we asked for a "snap," but found that all the liquor had been consumed, so we bade farewell to the members of the D.U.A.C., and retired.

There was a little sequel to this ball. A nigger had pawned his boots for 4s., and could not redeem them in time for the dance; so the pawnbroker lent them for 2s. to another nigger. As the evening wore on, the second nigger got thirsty, and going outside, sold the boots unknowingly to the owner for 1s., which enabled the first nigger to be a late arrival. After all the headaches were over the first nigger claimed the boots off the pawnbroker, who could not produce them. He was therefore summoned and fined, and for a week or two the owner of the boots had a good time of it.

IV.—THE SALT OF THE EARTH.

Most children say and do quaint things. Generally their remarks are original, and they are nearly always unexpected, or at least take us by surprise. This is what makes child life so entertaining.

The aunt who asked her little nephew, just picking himself up from a fall, whether he was hurt, did not expect to be told, "No! but I'm welly wexed!" The old gentleman who, seated on the Esplanade, noticed a little stranger trudging home after a hard morning's work on the sands, asked "Well, my little man, how are you?" did not expect the prompt and decisive answer: "Tired, 'ungry, goin' 'ome!" Nor did the lady who was just sitting down to lunch expect to be told by her hostess's youngster, anxious to show off his recently acquired knowledge, that the shoulder of mutton on the table was "dead moo cow!" Little, too, did the father, who was being helped by sonnie to dress, expect to be told, when his flannel unmentionables were handed to him, "Here, father, is the shirt for your legs!"

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There were three of them, or four, if you included Tommy. Bill, a handsome fair-haired girl, a clever animal painter, who, child as she was, had never yet let a horse master her. Daisy, a pretty brown-haired, bright-eyed maiden, who had a knack of handling wild birds which was almost unique and who spluttered over with fun and mischief, and a lovely brunette who, from her occasional unaccountably pinched face, looked much older than she was, and was named the Witch in consequence. All three were well-plucked ones, and fear was as much a stranger to them as truth is to a tramp. Then there was

their inseparable companion Tommy, an obstreperous four-legged youth who lived in the stables.

It was a warm June day, with a clear sky and a faint, pleasant breeze coming from the sea over Chanctonbury Ring, and, as the trees rustled near the open schoolroom window, and wandering bees and butterflies paid uninvited visits, the governess found increasing difficulty in keeping her pupils' attention directed to their lessons. The young ladies thought such a day as this no time for study, and, after several ineffectual attempts to get a half holiday, which really meant more than it seemed, for lessons were confined to morning only and the morning had hardly begun, the Witch said she must go out and have a drink of water. She did not return and was soon followed by Bill, who went to look for her, and she too not returning Daisy went after her, bolting the schoolroom door on the outside, for fear that if let out the governess might get into mischief! As the schoolroom was at the far end of the house it was very probable that the governess would remain there until released at lunch time by the cook.

No sooner had our three young friends made good their escape from tyranny than they flew to Tommy and proceeded to harness him to his little cart, forgetting for the moment that there had been a little kick-up on the part of Tommy the day before, and that the cart was not in a fit state to be taken out. But children are generally resourceful.

"Let's harness him to the pram," suggested Daisy, and immediately all hands proceeded to carry out the suggestion. The perambulator,

now at the end of its days, was brought up, and Tommy solemnly adjured to behave himself. Tommy turned to sniff at it, and feeling perfectly certain that the pram would not suit him at all, threw back his ears, and before any of the girls could intervene slung round and kicked the pram several yards away. A good scrimmage ensued, and in the end Tommy found himself on the ground with Daisy uncomfortably seated on his head.

Tommy being bested at last gave in, and he was led out on to the road with the pram in tow, kept well from his heels, for there being no shafts it was likely to tickle his hocks. Tommy had severely cracked the pram when he had knocked it over, thereby ageing it considerably, but the more rickety it was the more risk, and hence the greater desire to have a ride in it.

The Witch got inside, Daisy held on behind to act as a brake, if necessary, and Bill took the reins to walk alongside and get in when once started. For the first three yards, or perhaps three and a half, all went well. It was just going to be a delightful drive, when an unfortunate flick of the reins made Tommy jerk his shoulder into the collar, which drew the pram suddenly forward on to his hocks. He was all afire in a moment at the insult, but however freely he let out it was no good, as his kicks passed over the front wheel, and so, after a little more useless parleying with his hind legs, he started to run away from the hateful conveyance. With Daisy hanging on behind and Bill tugging at the reins and the Witch inside, his progress was a little slower than he would have liked, but it was a great deal faster than his friends were quite prepared for. Not many hundred yards down the road some woodmen were repairing a gate, and, in spite of Bill's determined efforts to keep clear, Tommy was as determined to run into them. He won. The Witch was thrown out, and in alighting assisted one of the woodmen to sit down. He appeared astonished! Released of some of his cargo, Tommy spun ahead, and Daisy, who still clung on behind, was literally floating along like an acrobat on a trapeze until the pram "broke itself in two" and she found herself on the sward, still holding on to what had been its back handle. It now resulted in a footrace between Bill and Tommy. There was hardly any pram left to draw, which eased him not a little, and Bill, with the reins in her hands, had to run to save herself from being pulled over. But all pleasures come to an end. A piece of the pram caught Bill's ankle. She was thrown and dragged along, still hanging on to the reins, until Tommy shied at a figure looking over the fence and suddenly concluded to stop. He turned to Bill, rubbed his nose into her neck in his usual effusive way, and waited patiently for her to get up; but she had been dragged along to such an extent that her clothes were in rags, and she had some difficulty in keeping them on at all. Daisy was picked up still holding the back end of the pram, and further on the Witch and the woodmen were hurrying up to give assistance now not needed.

There was considerable interruption to lessons after this, or should I say a period followed in which there were no lessons to interrupt, but for many weeks the labourers on the estates continued to bring in pieces of the hapless perambulator, which helped to make a grand bonfire on the Fifth November.

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They had removed to another county. The house stood on one side of the road and the farmyard on the other, but a little further away. At the corner of the house was a sort of turret staircase, from the window of which a delightful view of the surrounding country could be had.

This window was the favourite lingering place of the under housemaid on her way upstairs after breakfast. Perhaps she was aesthetically inclined. Perhaps she was not. In any case, on one particular morning the view could only have been part of her enjoyment, for on the road stood her sweetheart, the butcher's young man, so the view only came in as a setting to the enamoured being in the foreground.

But even a butcher's boy cannot stand for ever to show up a background, or himself either, and he was already moving off when the girl, in evident distress, threw out her arms, screaming out: "Miss Cherry is killed! Miss Cherry is killed!" and ran down the stairs out of the house. The screams roused everyone, and some of us, who were loitering about in the garden preliminary to a morning's walk, looking up, saw the little girl dropping apparently from nowhere into the farmyard. We all thought the child had been killed, and ran breathlessly into the farmyard to ascertain what had happened, when an extraordinary scene was laid before us. There stood the Witch, the child who had lately been disporting in the air, her eyes brilliant with fury, her face flushed, her hair awry, her skirt torn, and her feet planted firmly on the ground—a magnificent little Amazon, brandishing a pitchfork and breathlessly and hoarsely repeating "I'll kill that cow! I'll kill that cow!" Between her and the almost equally, if not infuriated and at least bewildered cow, was one of the farm labourers almost in vain trying to keep the peace between them and like peace-makers generally getting all the blows, for the Witch darted her pitchfork at him from one side in order to get at the cow, while on the other the cow could only be kept off by his banging at her with a bucket which he had picked up to defend himself.

When the cow had been driven into the byre and the Witch had been given time to recover, we learnt by degrees what had happened. The Witch had gone into the yard to look at some kittens whose home was there, and had not observed that the cow, a bad tempered animal, had been let out for a drink. In fact, until she was tossed she was quite unconscious of its presence. Fortunately, on coming down, she fell on the cow's neck, and this knocked over the cow, which was now more frightened than vicious, and so gave the Witch a chance to get hold of a handy pitchfork, in order, as she said, to kill it, when the labourer intervened. It was long

before the Witch settled down, and when asked later on in the day how she felt when in the air, the little maid replied: "All my sins came back to me!"

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"We do have butter to bacon, Grannie!"

"Grannie! We do have butter to bacon!"

"Grannie, Grannie," and a little half-ounce of impudence seated in his child's high chair hammered his spoon on the table to attract his Grannie's unwilling attention. "Don't we have butter to bacon?" asked the persistent little chap of an elder brother seated next him.

"No, we don't! and you are a naughty boy to say so," came the quick reply, but it made little difference, for the little boy went on repeating:

"Grannie, we do have butter to bacon. Mother always gives us butter to bacon, Grannie!"

"Get along and eat your breakfast," said his Grannie, roused up at last by his incessant chatter, "your mother does nothing of the sort."

It was the first morning after their parents had departed on a holiday, leaving Grannie in charge, and evidently she was going to have a good time of it if she gave in so early. However, the repetition went on: "Grannie, will you give me some butter to bacon?"

"No! I have told you. No."

"We do have butter to bacon, Grannie, we do," and putting his head on one side he peered across the table at his Grannie with an angelic smile on his bonny sweet little face, the very picture of innocence.

"Grannie," he said softly, "we do have butter to bacon, we do, Grannie."

But years and years ago, Grannie had attempted to teach her own grandmother to suck eggs, and evidently knew something, and the little beggar was still in the middle of his "We do have butter to bacon, Grannie, we do. We do have butter to b....." when the parlour maid came in and took the breakfast things away.

* * * * *

Her name was Agatha, which means the "good one," and owing to her mother's bad health she and her sister had of late been left very much to nurse's sole charge. It was her first visit, and the first thing she did was to pummel her sister for getting into the same armchair with her. Told to say she was sorry for having hurt her sister, her reply came prompt, "No! . . . S'ant!"

A beautiful beginning for a bonnie little maid not yet four years of age!

But her hostess insisted, and again came the determined reply:

"No! . . . Me s'ant!"

However, her hostess had youngsters of her own, and told our little friend if she did not say she was sorry she would have to be put outside! Was this one of nurse's threats, or did her hostess mean it? Agatha waited with mouth determinedly shut. Then her hostess approached to remove her.

There was a faint articulation which was understood to mean "Whisper." "Well, you may whisper if you like," and the apology was made.

The determination of her hostess had awed her, but a moment or two later the occurrence had vanished from her mind like ether, and she was about to kick over the little boy's brick house when she was once again called to order and told not to do so.

As defiantly as ever came the reply:

"S'all!" and steadying herself by the table she raised her foot to carry out the threat. But on the approach of her hostess she withdrew, shouting emphatically as ever, "S'all! S'all!"

Then she quietened down a bit and played with others as sweetly and prettily as any sturdy little fair-haired elfin.

At table when the maid handed her her plate she was told to say "Thank you."

"S'ant" was again the vivid reply. All the same, on her hostess insisting, a "thank you," but very sotto voce, was heard.

When the maid put the pudding on the table again Agatha got quite excited, pointing repeatedly at the dish and calling out:—

"What's that! What's that! What's that!"

Her hostess somewhat amazed replied "It is an apple pudding." Whereupon there came the defiant and triumphant answer "Then why don't you say thank you!"

After this she settled to her plate, and all the afternoon her behaviour was exemplary. When the trap came to fetch her and her sister, and her hostess and nurse were busy buttoning her gaiters, she tried to put on her gloves. First, the left hand glove not fitting on to the right hand was thrown across the table, and as the right hand glove did not fit the left hand, that was sent after it. Then she caught sight of a small silver bowl containing castor sugar, and by the time her gaiters were all buttoned up, most of the sugar had disappeared. Giving her hostess a hearty kiss, thanking her for the visit, and asking when she could come again, off she set.

* * * * *

She was the charming little daughter of very charming friends of mine, and I will call her little Eve, because that was not her name. We had the most delightful flirtations. I am sure I never flirted so much either before or since, and I am certain she had not before, as she was

only five and I was thirty-five, or thereabouts. What she has done since I cannot say, for even a wise little head when matched with a bewitchingly pretty face is apt to break hearts. However, we both flirted and we both enjoyed it.

In her company time speeded away until at last the happy days came to an end and we had to part. There had, however, been one little cloud hovering over our peace, or I should say over little Eve's peace. I had met another little girl in the train, and happened to say she was a nice little girl! Immediately there was an uproar, and it took the rest of the afternoon to pacify the little maid who did not settle down until she had eased her mind by saying that "It was not a nice little girl! It was a nasty, horrid little girl!" For the sake of peace I let it be at that. But at parting the spirit of mischief prompted me to ask what I was to say to the little girl in the train? I do not know what I expected, it might be an explosion, perhaps not tears, but at least a hard knock of some sort. There was no explosion! There were no tears! Nor was there any pouting or abuse! For a moment like a streak of lightning an angry flush appeared and disappeared on her pretty face, followed by twenty seconds of a calmness which promised to be painful. Then a triumphant smile appeared and with all the energy of her little soul, she threw her sweet arms round my neck, gave me a hug which I remember to this day, saying, "Tell her I kissed you!"

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There was an unnatural calm about the house. The fiendish joy of the servants, let loose for their annual dust harvest and furniture bashing, had subsided, the walls had been nicely papered, and nurse had been allowed to go home for a few days.

And the calm was the more impressive because usually with the presence of nurse the spirit of contrariness rose with the dawn.

Only the day before there had been a "to do." Nurse missing him found him opening a biscuit box in the dining room. "You must not have any," she said, as soon as she saw what was going on. The biscuit he had taken was grasped more tightly. "Well, just one, then!" said the helpless nurse.

By now he had got two!

"Well, you can have two but no more!"

Before nurse got so far he had three, and was helping himself further when she interfered physically, and as he was too much for her, mother was called in to give him something to remember her by. It was rarely this was done, but spring cleaning makes one tired and cross, and the blister, applied in the usual place, quietened all concerned. In the evening, on his father carrying him upstairs to bed, and asking whether he had been good, his reply was a prompt "Yes! but nurse has been naughty!"

Pressed for an explanation, the father was told that nurse would not let him have any biscuits at all!

"But biscuits are not good for you!"

"Well, father, you see it is like this. Don't you think when you want a thing you ought to have it!"

But to return to this almost Sabbath calm. About the usual hour of rising the mother awoke and remembered nurse was away, and yet all was so still that she fell asleep, and after a while jumped up in a hurry to find the boy's bed empty and cold. Listening for a moment for any sound that might indicate his whereabouts, she thought she heard a sort of soft swish swash, swish swash, with the occasional gentle clatter made by the handle of a pail. Quickly following the sound downstairs and into the hall, she stumbled on to a vision of Happiness personified in a dressing gown busy washing off the new wall paper!

After breakfast he soon got tired of his toys, and his mother read Jeremy Fisher to him. Over and over again he insisted that the story be repeated to him, and by the time she was perfectly sick of it he knew it all word by word, although he could not read a letter. For a bit she amused him with riddles, and presently he slipped away unnoticed.

Then there was a ring at the front door.

Cook's temper was like her age, uncertain. She had had an accident that morning, and when she found who it was who had rung, her temper rose like a meteor, and when further she was asked "Cook, how many sticks go to a crow's nest?" she was never nearer a fit in her life. But the little fellow, confident in his innocence and looking up to her with his beautiful expectant face all aglow with the hope of "catching" her, calmly awaited her answer—and temper fled.

Next he gave his doll a bath. The doll was an elegant "contrapshun," as Uncle Remus would have called it, made up of black Berlin wool. Dolls are usually obstreperous. This one declined to sit up, and was told "If you don't do as I tell you I'll give you something to remember me by as mother said to me when she smacked me!" which expression, repeated to his mother by the maid, induced her to think he would perhaps, like Eppie, do better without punishment, and from that day he got no more.

Later on he got out his strong wooden engine, snapped off the funnel so as to make a more comfortable seat, and shot down a sloping side walk on which he had placed obstructions to have an accident. But the obstructions did not work. Then he thought he would have an aeroplane, and obtained his mother's pink Church parade parasol to act perhaps as a parachute or anything else, and started off on his engine. This time the obstructions did act, and his mother had no further use for the parasol.

For a time he joined his neighbour's boys, who were having a picnic in the garden, and all went well until he wanted to paddle in the cauldron in which they were going to boil various articles supposed to be dear to boys' stomachs, amongst which good things were crocus roots for onions. Being baulked at this, he played at being a colt on the lawn, throwing himself down, rolling on his back with legs and arms kicking the air, and when he had accomplished this to his own satisfaction, and to the dissatisfaction of his clothes and his mother, he was brought in to tea.

But his labours were not over yet, for being left alone for a minute he clambered on to the

back of the big grandfather chair and began a series of grand slides down the curtains, his mother coming in with the maid and tea things in time to save the pole from coming down on top of him.

After tea he seems to have had enough of experimental physics. He got on to his mother's knee, cuddled her, took liberties with her hair, patted her cheeks with his little soft hand, told her she was the most beautifullest mother he had ever had, and finally fell asleep on her lap.

* * * * *

Fare ye well. And if for ever,
Still for ever, Fare ye well.

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